

Development perspectives and prospects...

*"My proposal is,
therefore, surely
the mildest possible
-Oh! It is so weak!*

*My proposal is
that at least
we should make
the true state
of affairs
known."*

- SOREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD

draft report of the follow-up group of Seminar on

'Comprehensive Rural Development'

feb. - March 1978 hyderabad

(CROSS-AARAMBH -RDAS-EZE)

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P R E F A C E

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In February/March 1978 a seminar was held in Hyderabad on 'Comprehensive Rural Development'. About 150 participants from different voluntary organizations attended to exchange ideas and experiences. Exchanges did take place, but more in the form of heated arguments and violent disagreements about the meaning of development and approaches to social change. Pleasant and not so pleasant remarks were exchanged. Intellectual and theoretical debates were interspersed with appeals for a pragmatic view of things, and over and over again the remarks, "you cannot achieve true dialogue with so many people of such divergent views", was heard. If something meaningful was to emerge, the group would have to be smaller, more homogenous, or more cohesive.

Keeping in mind the successes and shortcomings of this seminar a follow-up was planned. The attempt was made to bring together a small group of individuals, many of whom were working in the field of rural development and had reached a point in their work where they felt the need to move out of their areas, visit other programmes, critically analyse their experiences and develop a certain theoretical clarity on the issues confronting them.

The follow-up group was to visit different projects, and participate with them in a process of reflection and mutual learning. It was envisaged that the rich experience gained would then be shared with a wider group through a compilation of case studies of the projects visited, set in the context of the overall Indian situation with an attempt at analysing different approaches to development. /

Beyond this nebulous framework, with which the group started, the activities of the follow-up group were left unstructured. Now, looking back, we see that while this method of functioning had many positive elements and gave maximum leeway for collective functioning and creative innovation in response to immediate needs, there were innumerable unanticipated pitfalls.

Abha Bhaiya and Lakshmi Rao were to coordinate the activities

of the follow-up group, arrange for travel and accommodation. The group members were to write reports and send their comments which were then to be compiled, cyclostyled, and returned for further comments and changes. In actual operation, this system of reporting left much to be desired and for the most part report-writing became the effort of a small sub-group whose collective work came about mainly virtue of their physical proximity — their being based in the same town.

An instance of the group responding to an unforeseen need may be cited in the preparing of a 'guide line'. The group came back frustrated from the first few visits because there was no logic in the gathering of information. It had been assumed that the project visit itself would provide adequate for discussion, reflection and critical analysis, but there was in fact no method of interaction -- no base with which to begin. A framework was evolved for the members of the follow-up group to use. (Detailed proforma appended -- Appendix I). The guideline did facilitate group interaction to some extent.

At another stage, the group felt that the whole group was too big to visit a project together. The follow-up group was then divided into smaller sub-groups for the purpose of project visits. Although the follow-up group did try periodically to correct itself at every juncture, the outcome of its activities has several fairly serious and very obvious shortcomings. Most of the visits were very short and as a result, in most instances, no meaningful relationship could be built up with the members of the groups visited. Some of the groups visited had got the impression that the follow-up had come to evaluate their performance and this created barriers -- reactions in these groups were not spontaneous and the effort was to point out the successes rather than to analyse failures. This problem arose mainly because the ground work done before the visits was insufficient and real contact had not been established.

It often happened that the members of the follow-up group were overcritical of the activities of the projects visited. This

alienated many of the project holders, putting them on the defensive. The group today accepts that they were often prejudiced or were with preconceived notions. Another problem that manifested itself during the course of the follow-up activities was that this group itself had no really cohesive ideological stand. The visits brought the members of the follow-up group closer together and with this came heated discussions and arguments about problems in development and how they should be tackled, the perspective and limitations of development programmes etc. There were moments when this very exercise was questioned. Attempts were made to reconcile divergent views and although there was a genuine effort not to allow the domination of any one group to the isolation of any of the members, many of the members of the original follow-up group had by the end of the exercise dropped out.

At the end of November 1978 the follow-up group met to reflect on the case studies that had been prepared and to sum up the learning experiences of the preceding months. The form that the document planned earlier was to take was also discussed. It was decided that this document would outline various approaches to development and attempt to analyse their relevance or non-relevance in the context of the Indian situation. This document would, it was felt, be of use and be made available to:

- the organisations visited
- donor agencies
- any other groups or individuals who might have confronted similar problems in their work.

The document was intended as a 'means to facilitate a process of discussion among the members of the follow-up group with regard to their own involvement, and work; a definite guideline for donor agencies in their support of voluntary groups; a basis for links with the groups visited with a view to keeping in direct touch with the processes of development taking place in the light of the conclusions drawn in the study'.

As mentioned earlier, this document has many serious and very obvious limitations. The case studies are by no means representative of all the different approaches to development. The groups visited were chosen on the basis of prior contact that follow-up group members had had with them. One significant example of this limitation is manifest in the omission of the 'Gandhian approach' to development. Gandhian groups are an important part of the development scene and their ideological position has influenced the work of many groups and individuals. Again, the analysis of these approaches has not been done on the basis of data collected about the impact of the programmes. What information exists has been provided by the groups themselves and in none of the cases have scientifically conducted impact studies been carried out. In our analysis much of the data has been gathered from documented information about similar programmes.

T K Sundari prepared the first draft of this document with Ravindran and A J Bosco from February to August 1979. The draft report was circulated among the members of the follow-up group and after a meeting held in January 1980 the responsibility of the final editing of the document was taken on by Lakshmi Rao and Abha Bhaiya.

The attempt has been to make this document a really collective experience. Almost all the comments and suggestions made at each juncture have been incorporated and at the end of two years we hope that the document will have given at least a small insight into Development activity — its perspectives and prospects. It has been a learning experience for all of us and although we can make no claim to a comprehensive or in depth tackling of the problems posed or the finding of solutions, we hope that the document has made a small beginning in the direction of asking the questions.

The attempt in the first section of the document has been to recreate the context within which development activity is taking place. Statistics and case studies have been used to

highlight the fact that 33 years of planned economic development have left the plight of the majority of Indians unchanged. The activities of different voluntary groups have been analysed against this background. A brief outline of the fundamental assumptions of each approach followed by case studies on the basis of which comments are made has been presented. These broad approaches to development have been analysed:

- Welfare and Relief
- Growth Oriented Approach
- Organization and Education

The chapter, 'Perspective', attempts in the end to consolidate the preceding analysis and highlight certain issues that pose serious problems to developmental activity.

May 1980

P A R T I

INDIAN STATISTICS: FACTS AND FIGURES

CHAPTER I

Thirty-three years have elapsed since Independence. Seven General Elections have taken place. Six five-year plans (an innumerable annual plans) have been published. When then has been the broad sweep of the country's economic achievements? The first plan put forward 'reduction of inequalities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power' as one of its principal objectives. How far has this objective been achieved? The national output has increased 2.3 fold since 1950 (something that is reiterated in each plan document as a hall-mark of success). Foodgrain production is now more than twice as high as in 1950. Wheat output about five times as high. Sugar supplies have trebled. Rice, jawar, bajra, cotton have all more than or nearly doubled.

Industrial output is now over four times its volume in 1950. That development of a kind has taken place is undeniable, and yet more than half of India's population continues to go hungry, slowly and inexorably. More and more people are being pushed below any humanly accepted levels of existence. Land reform programmes have been a dismal failure. The numbers of the unemployed seem to rise in geometric progression. Rural labour flecks to the urban areas in the hope of finding work that is not there. Good health and education are outside the reach of the majority. Housing conditions deteriorate and indebtedness multiplies. Prices continue to sky-rocket and, to add insult to injury, the poor are continually called upon to tighten their belts another notch — when, in fact, there are no holes left and the buckle can only bite into their flesh.

Although economic indicators like per capita consumption expenditure, percentages of people living below poverty line and statistical data are by no means adequate for gaining a real understanding of the physical, psychological and social dimensions of a perpetual state of living in want (the plight of the majority of Indian citizens), even the crude picture that they reveal would be a shock to many.

1988	15	④	5/1
1989	16	⑤	⑥
1990	17	⑦	⑧

Per capita private consumer expenditure:

A survey of people's levels of living during the past two decades shows that per capita private consumer expenditure (which is considered by economists to be a realistic indicator for assessing the level of living) in 1960-61 stood at Rs.276.3 per annum, or 75.7 paise per person per day. This figure was only the average, for, if we look into the actual distribution, the findings are more appalling. According to a National sample survey, per capita rural consumption in 1960-61 was Rs.261.2 per annum and more than 63.26 per cent of the population lived below this average. In the urban areas the corresponding figure was Rs.359.2 and more than 64.51 per cent lived below this average. Sizable sections of the population, as the following table shows, were very much poorer.

In the rural areas:

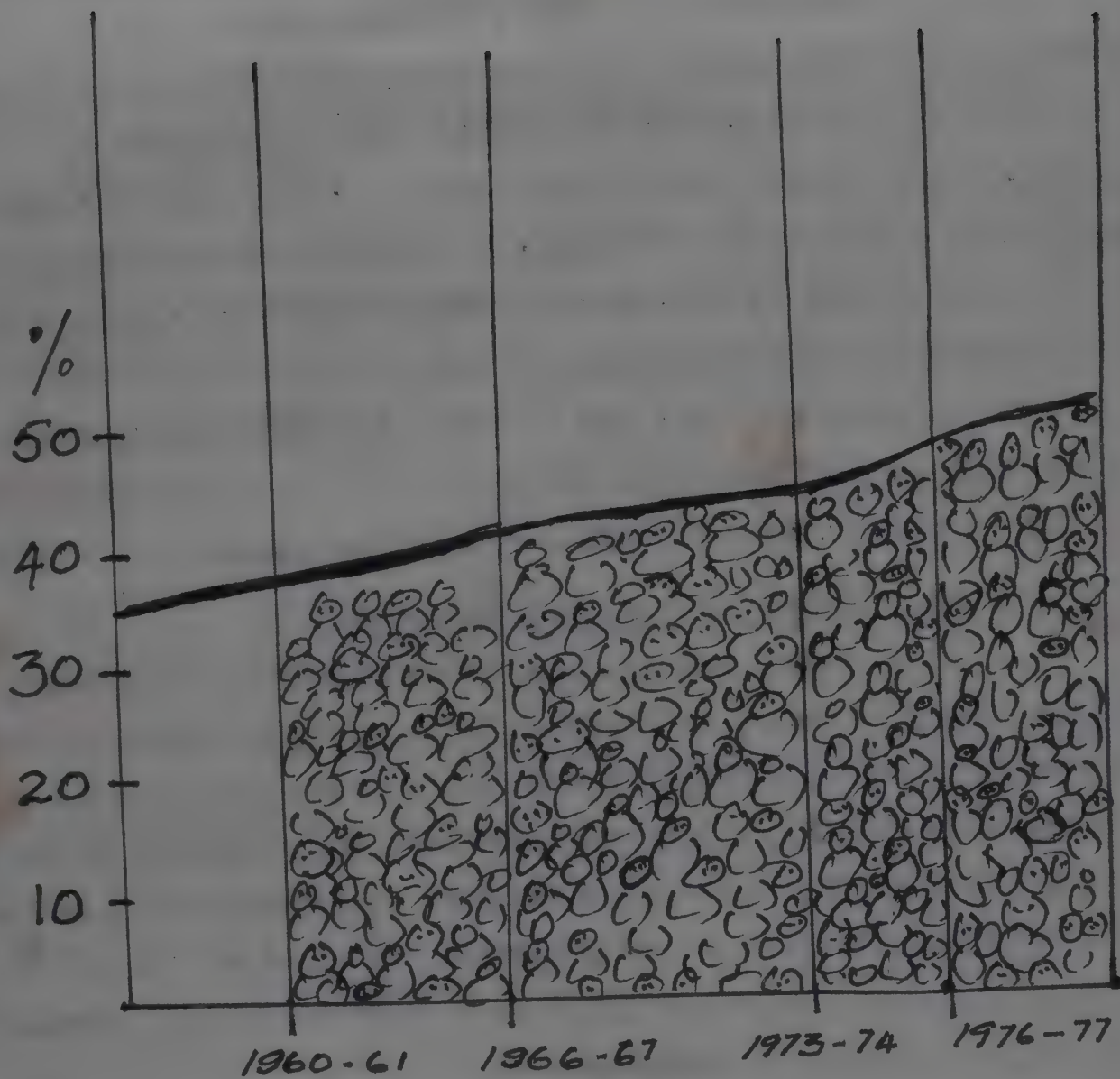
the bottom most 6.3 per cent	earned only 27 paise per day
11.95 per cent	earned only 37 paise per day
9.83 per cent	earned only 43 paise per day
9.82 per cent	earned only 50 paise per day

Anomalous distribution of meagre gains:

Between 1969-70, the per capita rural consumer expenditure rose by 3.8 per cent and the urban per capita consumer expenditure by 2.4 per cent. If we probe further and ask how this increase was distributed between the rich and the poor, we find that the consumption of the poorest 5 per cent actually declined by about 2.4 per cent while that of the middle 40-60 per cent of the population increased by between 3.7 and 4.1 per cent. The consumption of the upper middle and rich sections rose by 4.4 per cent. It is possible that the consumption of the richest — the top 10 — 5 per cent actually increased by even more, but this conservative estimate is made due to lack of more direct statistical evidence.

The same trend continues to prevail, and according to estimates made in 1973-74, although the percentage of rural

PERCENTAGE BELOW POVERTY LINE



YEARS

households with per capita consumer expenditure below poverty norms showed a marked increase, the comparative rise in poverty was less among those with higher consumer expenditure than among the bottom most sections, proving thereby that even the small gains of development are always distributed unequally. The situation has continued to worsen, and according to the recent Planning Commission's report, the percentage of population below the poverty line in 1977-78 may be projected at 48 percent in rural areas and 41 per cent in urban areas. The total number of poor would be about 290 million. If the gradation of poverty were to be made in terms of the 'depth of poverty', we find that 160 million people live below the stipulated level of poverty. Again statistics by themselves hide the fact that just above the poverty line, there is a large section of the population that face outside the gamut of developmental activity because they do not fall below the poverty line — a purely statistical indicator of want.

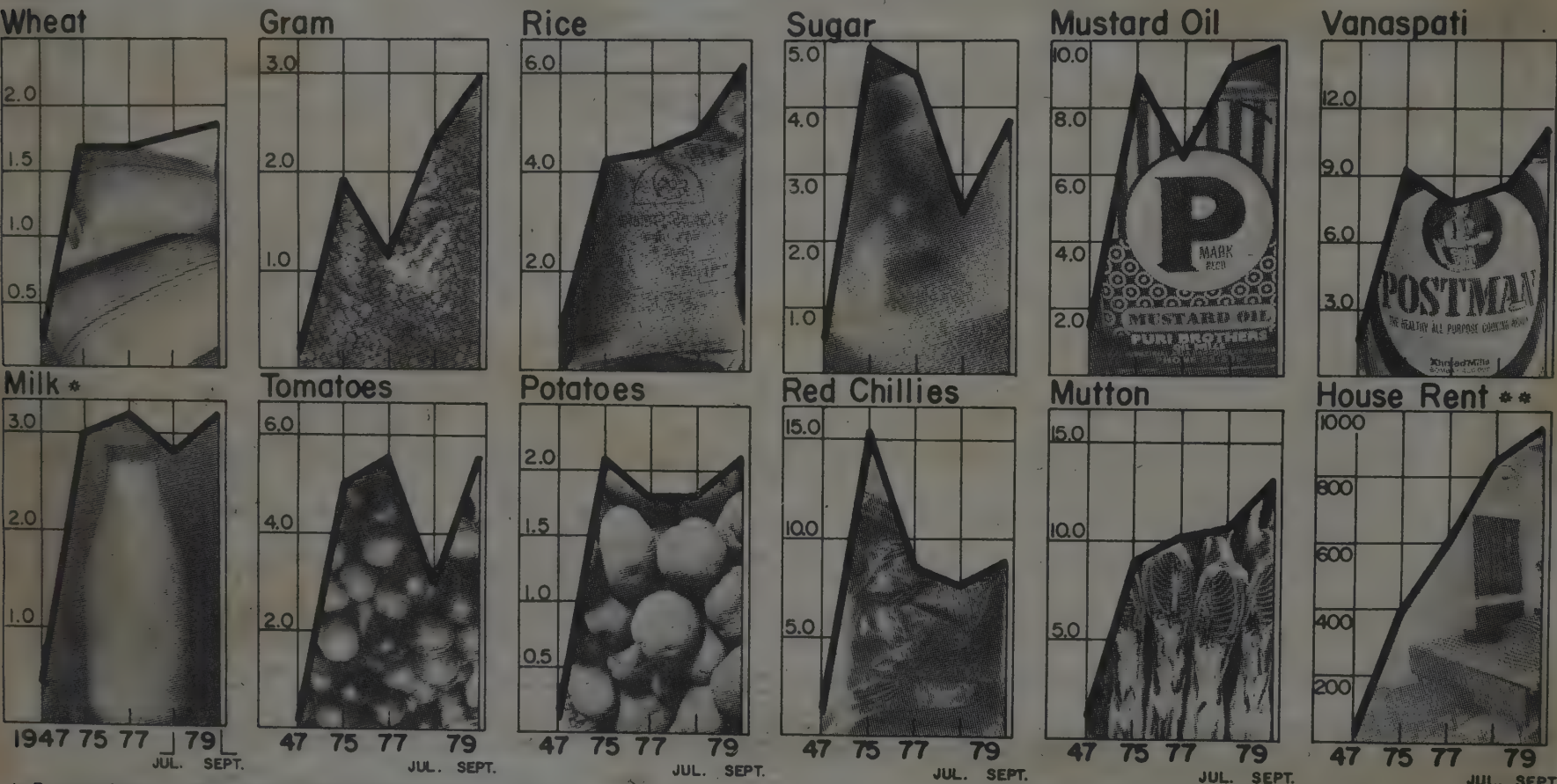
Who are the poor that we are talking of?:

The urban poor are mainly the rural poor driven to the cities in the hope of eking out a meagre living. In essence, they are a spillover of the rural poor. The rural poor consist predominantly of agricultural labour households and small landowners with cultivated holdings of less than 5 acres, and particularly less than 2.5 acres. The two groups would also include village artisans increasingly thrown out of their traditional occupations.

The Reserve Bank of India report on the All India Debt and Investment Survey of 1971-72 identifies the rural poor as follows: "This poor class of rural households includes cultivators who are only part-time farmers, as their land base is too small to make a living therefrom. They are mainly wage-earners as their major source of income is from farm and non-farm employment". There is not much difference between a

COMMODITY PRICES SINCE INDEPENDENCE

(RS. PER KG.)



* Rs. per litre ** 2-Bed Room in New Delhi INDIA TODAY Chart by B. K. Sharma

part-time cultivator and an agricultural labourer except that the former personally cultivates a piece of land. Artisans or village craftsmen (weavers, blacksmiths, potters, carpenters, bricklayers etc.) producing some traditional goods for limited local markets are also covered in this category. Some of their crafts are on the decline while many others are handicapped by low production and a poor income-generating capacity. Many of them may also need to supplement their income with some kind of wage employment along with the others in this category. According to the 1971 census, 47 million workers reported themselves as agricultural labourers, whose precarious living conditions are affected by many factors including their wage situation and the ineffectiveness of government land tenure (legislations).

In 1971, the All India average rate was Rs.2.87, varying from Rs.1.68 in Madhya Pradesh to Rs.4.97 in Punjab. The per capita income of agricultural labour in 1970-71 worked out to Rs.253 per annum, far below the poverty level which stood at Rs.324 per annum at 1968-69 price levels. The minimum wages legislation was supposed to help the growth of an organised labour movement to take advantage of the legislation, but minimum wages prescribed often fell far behind prevailing average wages that this was hardly possible. The meagre increase in wages, once in a while, made no difference. The average daily money wage seems to have gone up from 1.43 in 1964-65 to Rs.3.24 in 1974-75 but after being corrected for price rise, the increase stands at a mere Rs.1.26.

Apart from having the dubious distinction of forming the bulk of the population that goes down in statistics as falling below the poverty line, these people who have so little to spend bear the added burden of being in a state of perpetual indebtedness. Two-thirds of the agricultural labour households were in debt in 1964-65. The total indebtedness of those from only non-institutional sources increased from 30.6 per cent in 1964-65 to 47.8 per cent in 1974-75. Another dimension of

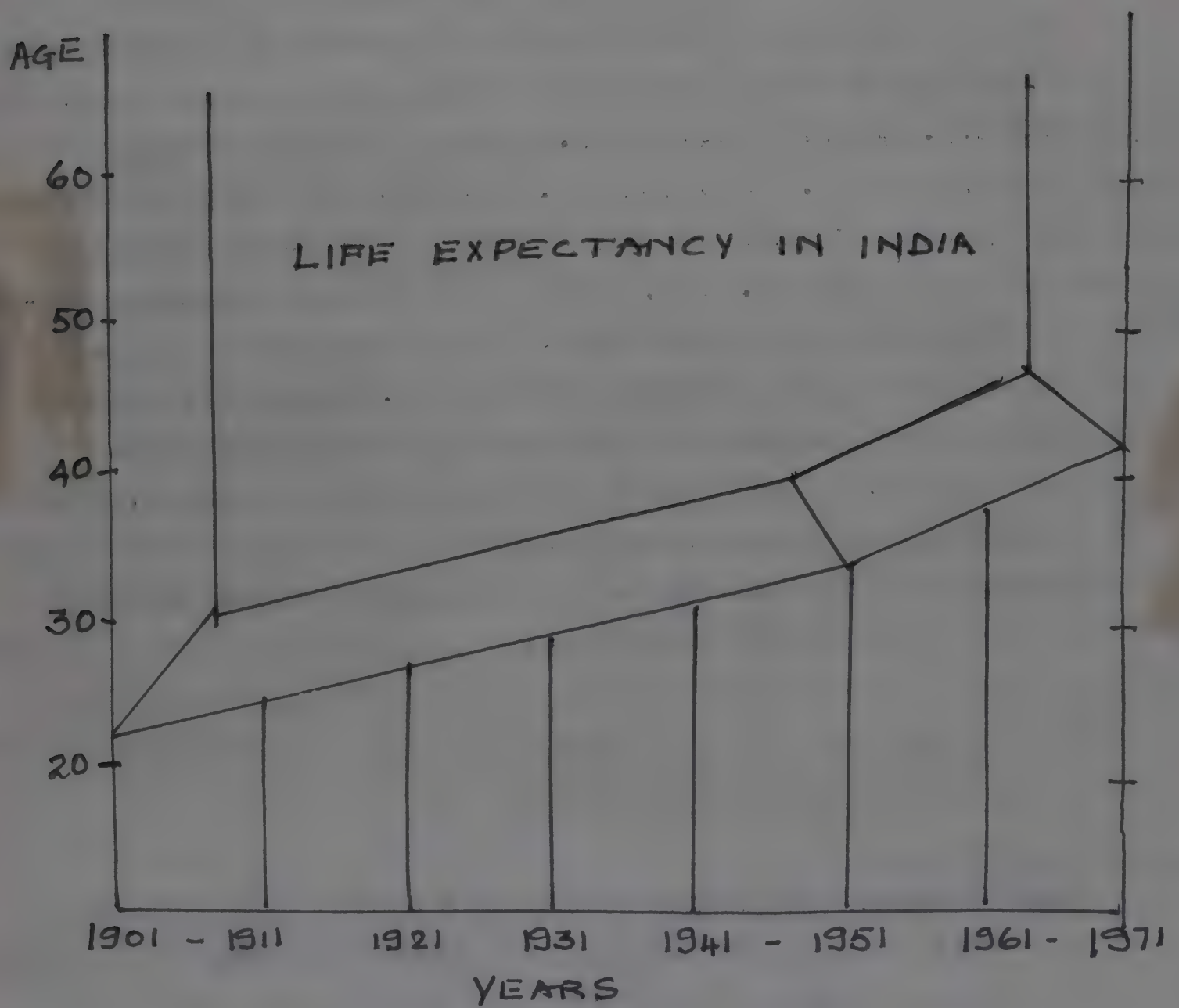
this problem of "indebtedness" is revealed when we find that more than 2 million agricultural labourers are bonded, caught in a kind of "debt-serfdom". The fact that a large percentage of the bonded labourers remain in debt just to meet their daily needs is but one indicator of their growing impoverishment. What is more surprising is the fact that 56 per cent of the bonded labourers have gone into bondage during the last 3 years, the same 3 years during which the 'Bonded Labour System Abolition Act' was supposed to have come into existence.

The prevalence of poverty and inequality is overwhelming in the case of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who constitute 15.04 per cent and 7.5 per cent of the total population respectively. In 1971, 82.3 per cent of the Scheduled Caste and 93.8 per cent of the Scheduled Tribe workers were engaged in agriculture. Yet, only 3½ per cent of them possessed land (five acres or less). Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes form 33 per cent and 10.5 per cent of the total number of landless in the country respectively and in 1971 less than 5.29 per cent owned more than 15 acres. Details about employment, housing, water, medical care and education add other horrifying dimensions to this formidable and gruesome picture of poverty in India.

Employment:

Unemployment in the Indian situation takes different forms (from unemployment in other countries). There are those who are chronically unemployed (around 4 million persons in 1973) and those who can find employment at sometimes but not at others. This, measured in terms of man-days, was equivalent to 18.6 million persons (in 1973).

Between 1971 and 1978, when the labour force increased by 35 million, non-agricultural activities absorbed only 9 million people. The general pattern of manpower deployment in the country is that only 10 to 11 per cent of the increase in the labour force drifts into part-time employment in the



rural areas, to the informal sector or urban industry and trade. The rest become chronically unemployed. This lack of employment obviously reflects the waste of a tremendous amount of human potential.

Housing:

Available data regarding the shortage of housing in the urban and rural sectors is unreliable and unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, according to assessment made by the National Building Organization on the basis of figures on housing stock in 1961 and projections for subsequent years, it is estimated that the current housing shortage in the urban areas would be of the order of 6.2 million houses. The position in respect to rural housing is even worse. The number of rural households at the beginning of the Fifth Plan was 90 million, of which approximately 72 million must have been living in pucca, semi-pucca, or serviceable kutcha houses. The balance of 18 million households live in bad, dilapidated and impoverished structures which would require replacement. It was projected that 1.8 million houses a year would be required to meet the anticipated increase in population alone. The housing conditions of landless agricultural labourers is worse. About 12 million did not own their own house sites. Existing income levels make it difficult for these groups to participate in public schemes for they are unable to pay even the concessional rates on which these houses are provided.

Health and hygiene:

The Mudaliar Committee recommended the norm of 1 bed per 1,000 people and one doctor per 3,000 to 3,500. This norm is still nowhere within reach. 80 per cent of the population which lives in the rural areas has only 30% of the hospital beds, and 20 per cent of doctors in the country.

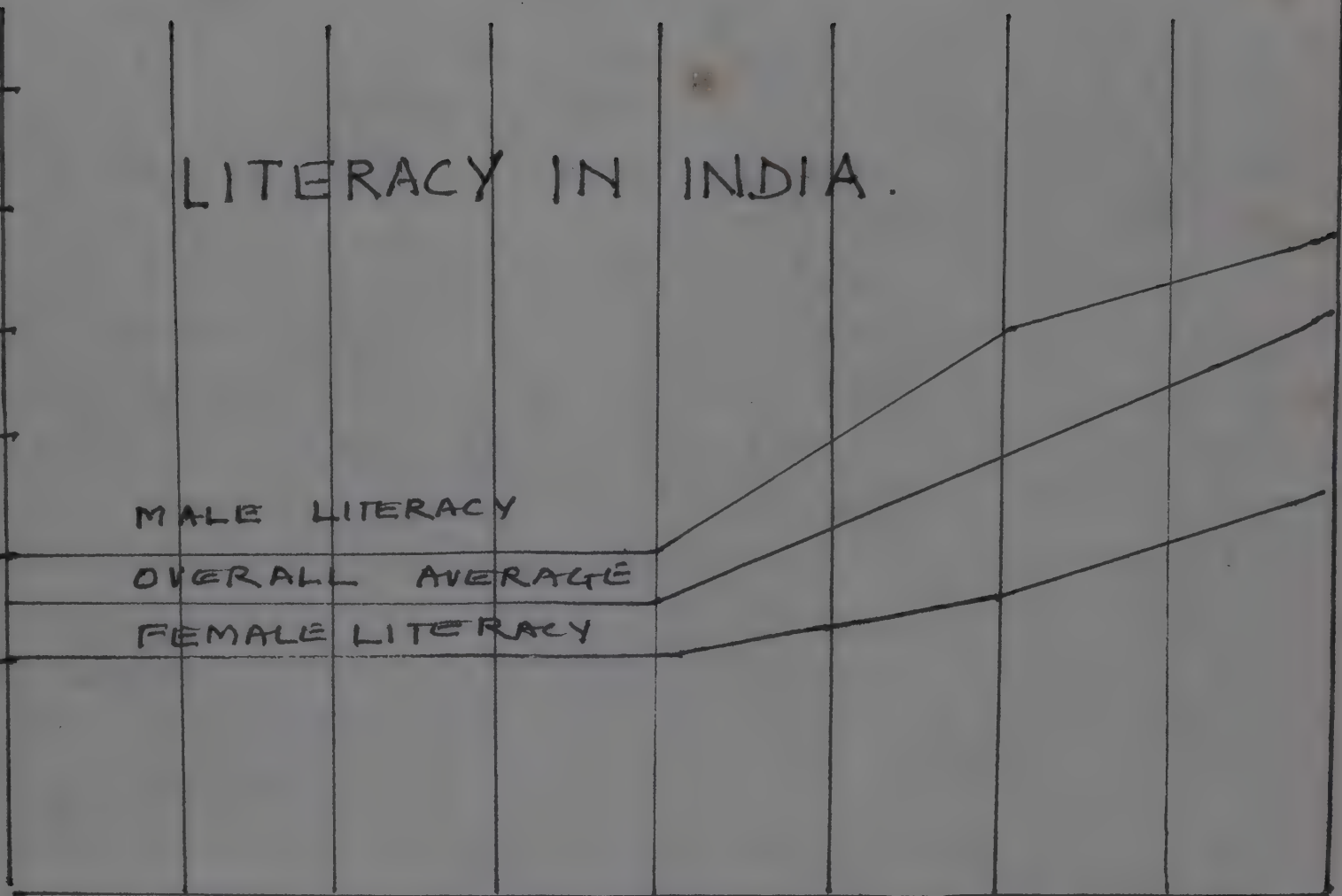
On the eve of Fifth Plan, 85 per cent of the urban population had the benefit of piped water supply but nearly 1.16 lakh villages with a population of about 61 million did not have even the most elementary water supply. Only

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION.

LITERACY IN INDIA.

MALE LITERACY
OVERALL AVERAGE
FEMALE LITERACY

1891 1901 1911 1921 1931 1941 1951 1961 1971



38 per cent of the urban population had sewage. In the rural areas and medium and small towns, the implementation of a proper sewage and drainage schemes have hardly begun.

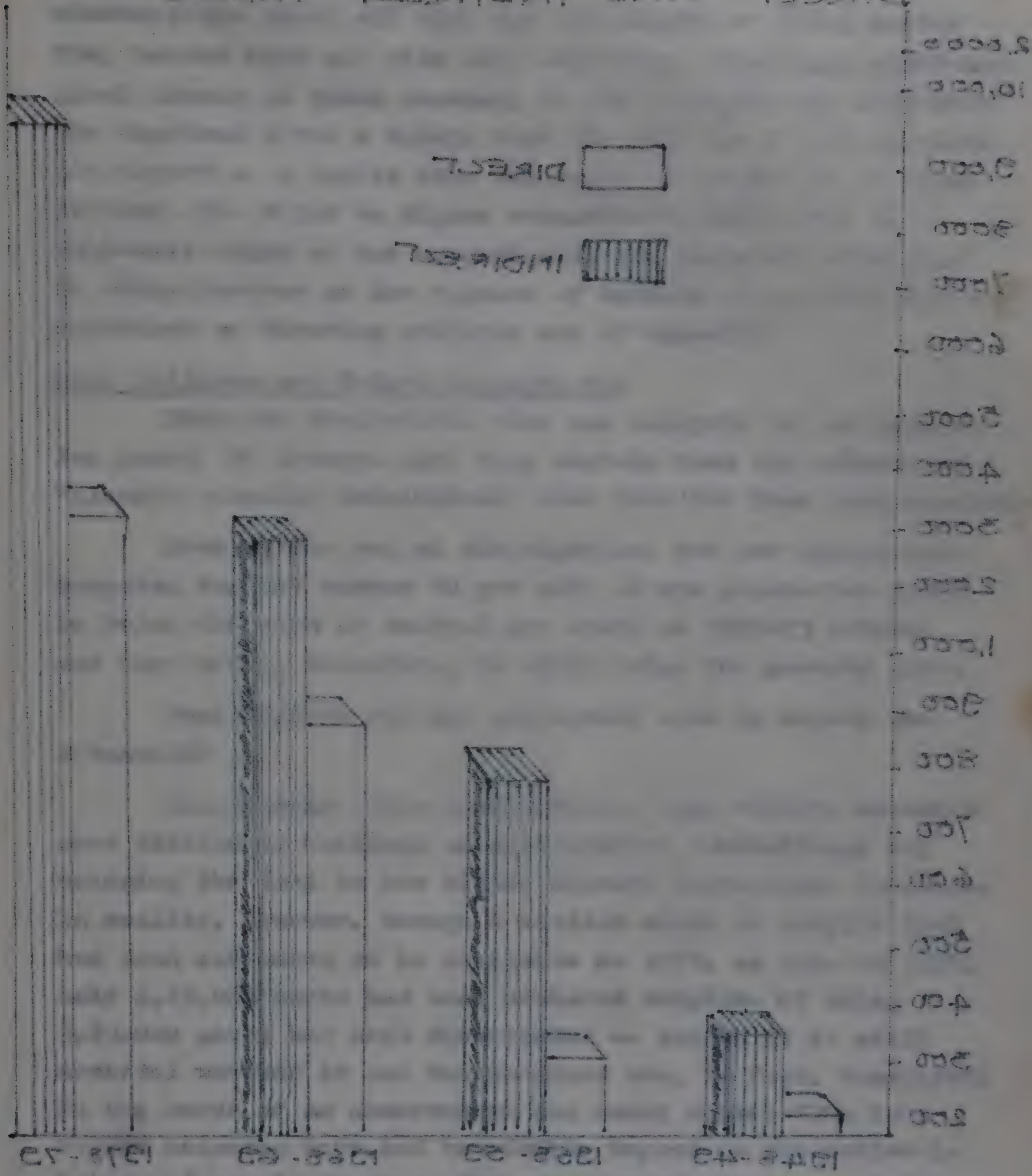
Education:

Although the literacy level in India has risen from percent in 19... to percent in 19..., we find that during the same period, there has been a rise in the total number of illiterates. In 1971, there were 53 million more illiterates in the country than in 19.... A glance at the Kothari Commission report shows us that the percentage of total educational expenditure marked for lower primary schools has been steadily decreasing. 38.9 per cent of the total educational expenditure in 1950-52 was marked for lower primary schools. The figure in 1960-65 decreased to 23 per cent. This decrease has been accompanied by a lower average annual growth rate for lower primary school education (8.4 per cent than for college education (12.1 per cent).^{*} The same report informs us that 56% of the children who join lower primary schools stop coming to school even before they have completed class I because they are too poor** to continue going to school. In the meanwhile, money is lavishly spent on colleges which produce unemployed graduates. In 1970, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, in an all-India report of their field studies in the Sociology of Education, said that the students are mainly drawn from the relatively higher strata of landowners and cultivators in the rural areas and the white collar workers in the urban areas. Data for 1971 presented in an article by Ajit Singh convincingly shows how there has been a progressive increase in the proportion of students coming from the income groups of Rs.500/- and above. These are

*Kothari Commission Report, p.467

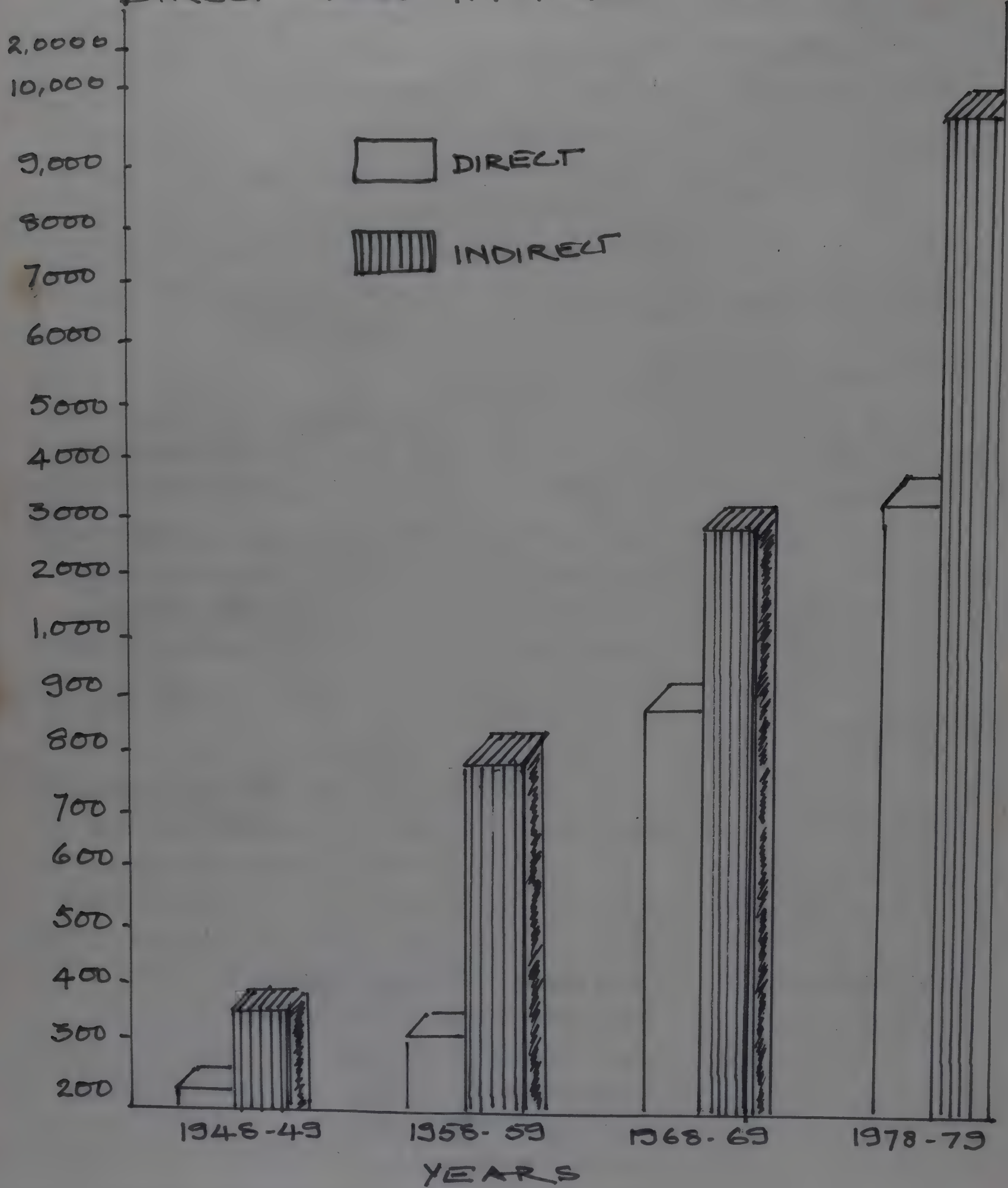
**Kothari Commission Report, pp.157 and 159

DIRECT AND INDIRECT TAXES



YEARS

DIRECT AND INDIRECT TAXES



students who start off with the advantages of being better fed, better clad and with more economic, social and psychological assets at their command. In the struggle for education the deprived enter a battle that for them is a lost one from the outset — a battle that can never be fought on an equal footing. The right to higher education becomes then "the exclusive right of the economically and socially privileged to study further at the expense of society — a right that is exercised by throwing children out of school".*

Past failures and future projections:

From the statistical data and analysis in the preceding pages, it becomes more than obvious that the effects of "planned economic development" have been far from satisfactory.

Even at the end at mid-eighties, the per capita consumption for the bottom 80 per cent of the population would be below the norm of Rs.40.6 per month at 1972-73 prices, and they would, therefore, be still below the poverty line.

What efforts has the government made to remedy the situation?

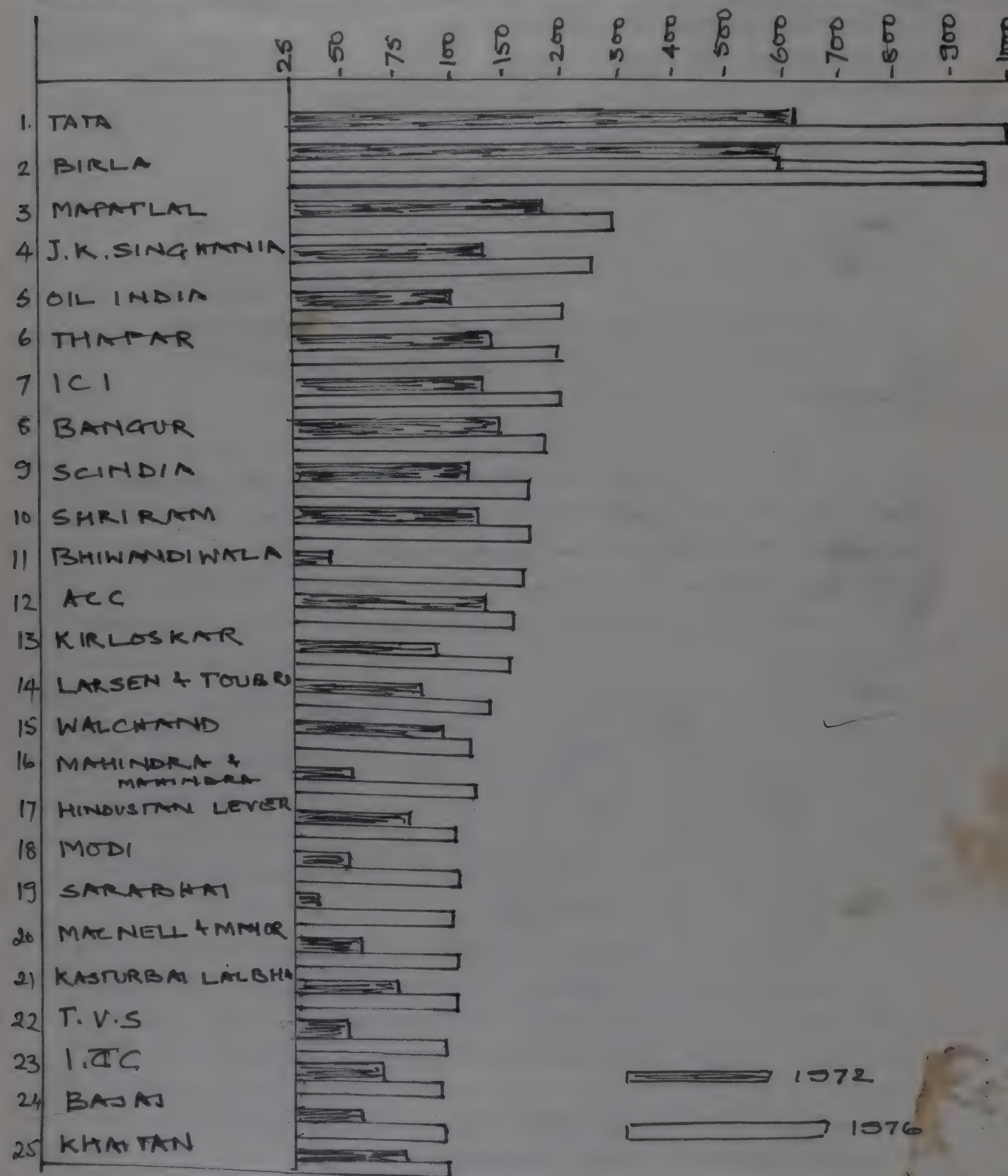
Immediately after independence, land reforms measures were initiated. Ceilings on agricultural landholdings and bringing the land to the tiller feature prominently in these. In reality, however, though 4 million acres of surplus land had been estimated to be available in 1972, as late as 1976, only 6,25,000 acres had been declared surplus. Of this, 3,23,000 acres had been distributed — though it is still doubtful whether it was the landless who, in fact, benefited. In the words of an observer to the rural scene, "The land reform measures have had no visible impact on the redistribution of rural property. The quantity of surplus land distributed under the land reform programme was less than one-fourth of the officially estimated surplus. But even more

* Amartya Sen

1937/38 ASSETS OF TOP 25 INDUSTRIAL HOUSES

Rank	House Name	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	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1972/76 ASSETS OF TOP 25 INDUSTRIAL HOUSES.



noteworthy is the fact that the officially estimated surplus is only a fraction of the area held in large ownership holdings as estimated for survey data.

An observation by Ranjit Sau on the causes for the appalling dimensions of rural poverty reveals that the higher the productivity of land, the larger the percentage of rural population below poverty line! This is because higher productivity of land is associated with a higher concentration of landholdings, resulting in consolidating the strength of the landowners. This means that it is not the productivity of land, but the exploitation of man that accounts mainly for rural poverty.

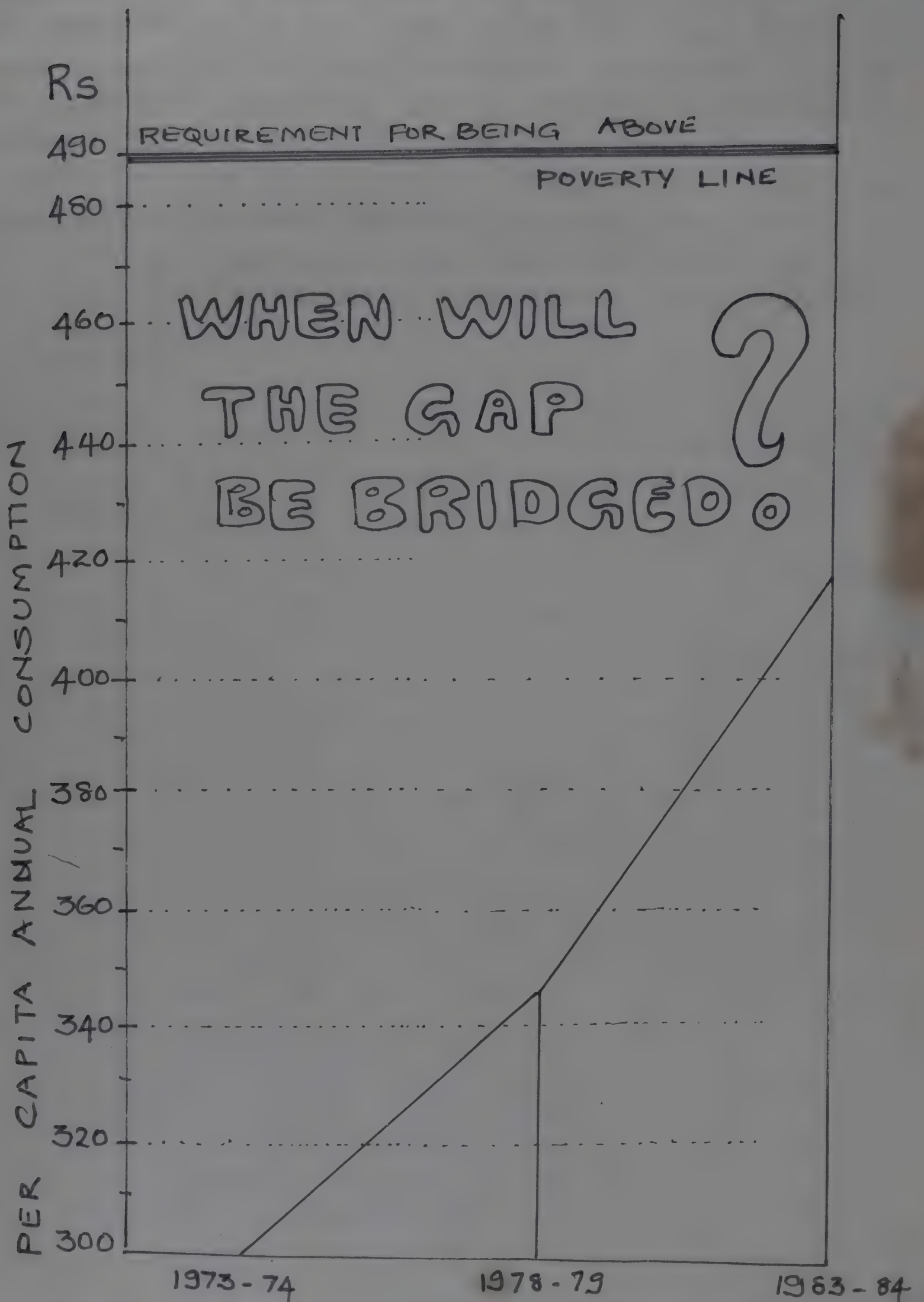
In the draft plan it is noted that the pattern of industrial development that has emerged obviously reflects the structure of effective demand which is determined by the distribution of incomes. An unduly large share of resources is thus absorbed in production which reflects directly or indirectly to maintaining or improving the living standards of the higher income groups. The fruits of even government investment in social infrastructure have accrued mainly to the relatively affluent. Similarly, those who have benefited most from the growth of banking, insurance and commerce have been the wealthier sections of the population, both in urban and rural areas, and the vast majority has barely been touched. Simultaneously, the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few has increased.

This is in effect a draining of resources from the poor and middle classes to the rich because in the past four decades, indirect taxes, paid mainly by the middle and lower income groups, have been consistently stepped up while the share of direct taxes paid by those who fall in the higher income categories has come down. Between 1972 and 1976, every one of the top 25 industrial houses increased its assets while the masses got poorer and the government continued to pay lip service to the cause of the "poor masses". Statistics alone make it

clear that decades of 'rapid growth' in India have been of little or no benefit to more than half of the population. The crisis lies in the poverty of these masses whose needs — even the most basic — food, habitat, health, education — are not met; it lies in their alienation, deprived as they are of the means to understand and master their social and political environment. Millions go hungry because the total national income and hence aggregate consumption, is too small relatively to the total population on the one hand and the distribution of this income and consumption is very uneven on the other. It is an accepted fact that "no rate of growth that can be realistically envisaged could make a major impact on the problem within the foreseeable future if inequality remains as acute" (as it is today).

Trends in the distribution of wealth and income are difficult to discern and yet the persistence of gross inequalities is clear. An analysis of consumption expenditure on the basis of the 18th round of the National Sample Survey shows that the lowest 20 per cent accounted for 8.89 per cent of total consumption in rural areas while the highest 20 per cent accounted for 40 per cent. In urban areas, corresponding figures for the lowest 20 per cent and the highest 20 per cent were 7.64 per cent and 45.13 per cent respectively.

The distribution of assets in rural households shows that 20 per cent of households each having less than Rs.1,000 of assets account for less than 1 per cent of all assets, while 4 per cent with asset values of Rs.50,000 or more own over 30 per cent. As for landholding, 55-59 per cent of the households had either no land or less than 2.5 acres each, and between them operated only 7 per cent of the total land. On the other hand, 2.09 per cent of the households had more than 30 acres each and accounted for more than 23 per cent of the total cultivated land. (Dandekar & Rath 1971).



It might at this point be relevant to ask the question that Nehru asked over thirty years ago. "Whither India?" Even the Planning Commission's reports are singularly unpromising, revealing that according to Planning Commission's estimates, the per capita consumption for the bottom 80 per cent of the population in the mid-1980s would be below the norm of Rs.40.6 per month at 1972-73 prices, implying thereby that even in the mid-1980s, more than 80 per cent of the population would be below the poverty line.

P A R T II

INDIAN REALITY - A DIFFERENT DIMENSION TO PROGRESS

INTRODUCTION

The Indian economy has moved from crisis to crisis. The average annual rate of growth from 1948-49 to 1969-70 of real national product was around 3.3 per cent. The per capita rate of growth was slightly over 1 per cent, and the rates of growth were lower in the Development Decade of the 1960s than in the 1950s. Dandekar and Rath, after appropriate adjustments, give the recommended national minimum expenditure level to be Rs.180/- per capita per annum at 1960-61 prices in the rural areas and Rs.270/- in the urban. At this low base, 40 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban were found to be poor. And yet there has been progress.

During the first three Five-Year Plans, India's approach to development was characterized by a commitment to two co-equal goals: (i) the economic aim of achieving maximum increases in agricultural output to support the envisaged process of rapid industrialization (ii) the social objective of reducing disparities. Statistics cited thus far have by themselves shown how these two goals have proved to be irreconcilable. The glaring features of inequality and poverty not only persist but are becoming more acute. And yet, paradoxically, rapid transformations have taken place on many fronts — Universities have been founded, the growth process stimulated, industrial expansion has been accomplished; fertilizer, cement and steel production has increased and green and white revolutions striven for. And yet, ironically enough, people have remained poor. The disease seems not only to be persistent but capable of reinforcing and sustaining itself.

It becomes clear that the level of inequality is incompatible with the social goal of the removal of disparities. When the economic situation brightens and "glows", the fire of progress singes, tears and burns out more than it illuminates. The attempt has been made in the succeeding part of this chapter to present case studies and analysis of "success stories" in the Indian context — "break-throughs" achieved at the cost of millions of tribals, landless, small peasants and women,

"victories" that have wrought untold damage and devastation, accomplishing little more than very limited targets.

CHAPTER I

GREEN REVOLUTION: for prosperity or for deprivation

As early as 1958, lagging growth rates in the agricultural sector became a serious limiting factor on the overall rate of economic advance. By the middle of the Third Plan, four years of relatively static production levels (1960-61 through 1963-64) convinced the Planning Commission that continuation of shortfalls in agriculture would jeopardise the entire programme of industrial development. Of necessity, some retreat from the social goals of planning had to be contemplated. In 1964, two major departures from previous policy were initiated: (1) development efforts would subsequently be concentrated in the 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the cultivated area where supplies of assured water created "fair prospects of achieving rapid increases in production"; and (2) within these areas, there would be a "systematic effort to extend the application of science and technology," including the "adoption of better implements and more scientific methods" to raise yields. In October 1965, 114 districts (out of 325) were selected for an Intensive Agricultural Areas Program (I.A.A.P.). Initially pioneered by the Ford Foundation, the I.A.A.P. emphasised the necessity of providing the cultivator with a complete "package of practices" in order to increase yields, including credit, modern inputs, price incentives, marketing facilities, and technical advice.

The economic rationale of an intensive agricultural areas programme was strengthened by the technical breakthrough reported from Taiwan and Mexico in 1965 of the development of new varieties of paddy and wheat seeds, with yield capacities of 5,000 to 6,000 pounds per acre, almost double the maximum potential output of indigenous Indian varieties; and also by the development at Indian research stations in the late 1950's of higher yielding hybrid varieties of maize, bajra, and jowar. In all cases, the availability of controlled irrigation water

and the application of the package of modern inputs, especially very high doses of chemical fertilizer and pesticides, were essential preconditions for realizing maximum yield potentials.

The New Strategy already has spectacular economic gains to its credit. Wheat production in 1967-68 reached a record high of 16.6 million tons, one-third more than the previous peak output of 12.3 million tons achieved in the last good weather year of 1964-65. Despite unfavourable seasonal conditions in 1968-69, it exceeded this new level. In 1969-70, national wheat output rose to another record high of approximately 20 million tons.

The new paddy varieties have been less striking as a result of unsolved technical problems, the plant's vulnerability to disease and the coarse grain quality. Nevertheless, with the All-India Coordinated Rice Improvement Project conducting large-scale experiments, many or all of these problems may be solved. In fact, while the total rice output in 1967-68 remained disappointingly lower than the previous peak level of 1964-65 (37.9 million tons compared to 39 million tons), production recovered in 1968-69 to the previous record. In 1969-70, rice output resumed its upward climb and reached an estimated total of 40.4 million tons. Despite the poor weather conditions of 1968-69, total foodgrains output of 94 million tons approached the record production of 95.6 million tons achieved in 1967-68 (as against the previous peak of 89 million tons in 1964-65) suggesting the power of the new technology to liberate the fortunes of Indian agriculture from the vagaries of the monsoon. In 1969-70, when estimates of total foodgrains output indicated a landmark achievement of nearly 100 million tons. The Food Ministry substantially reduced its annual imports of foodgrains and confidently predicted that India would be completely self-sufficient in 1972.

No State is more closely identified with the gains of the green revolution than Punjab, and no district more enthusiastically advanced as a model for emulation than Ludhiana.

Between the pre-package year of 1960-61 and 1968-69, the area under irrigation increased from 45 per cent to 70 per cent. Between 1960-61 and 1967-68, consumption of fertilizer increased more than 13 times, from 17.6 pounds to 242 pounds per cultivated acre. Between 1965-66 and 1968-69, the acreage under the new Mexican dwarf varieties expanded from 170 acres to 420,000 acres, accounting for 90 per cent of the total acreage under wheat. Yields per acre increased from an average of 1,385 pounds in 1960-61 to over 3,280 pounds in 1968-69 (i.e., by over 120 per cent). During the last few years, Ludhiana has seen a trend toward mechanization which promises even greater efficiency in the exploitation of the new technology for intensive cropping. In April 1969, there were not less than 2,500 tractors in use and possibly as many as 5,000, most representing purchases over the past two years. The major suppliers of tractors in Ludhiana, Massey-Ferguson and International Tractor, estimated that orders currently on file totalled at least another 2,500. Even larger increases in the demand for smaller machines, especially seed and fertilizer drills and threshers are reported. What has been achieved in Ludhiana must be considered a change in kind rather than degree, for it signals the beginning of a transformation of agriculture from an impoverished "way of life" to a profitable business occupation.

Optimism is based on the prediction that with the progressive displacement of bullock power by tractors and other machines, Indian farmers will for the first time be able to enjoy the economies of scale that have made agriculture a profitable business enterprise in advanced countries. As for the inefficient cultivators, the small farmers who cannot afford the new technology, ultimately, this class will find the gap in returns to investment on large and small farms so great that they will sell their holdings and leave agriculture. The tenant class will begin to disappear: specially, the owner-cum-tenant cultivator who used to rely on leased-in land to create an economic unit of operation will sell his

small and scattered holdings as he finds large farmers unwilling to rent land that can be cultivated directly at a higher profit.

The displacement of small farmers and owner-cum-tenant cultivators is not viewed with alarm. On the contrary, it is assumed that economic rationalization will proceed and the class of inefficient cultivators — small farmers and tenants — will leave agriculture because they become aware of better opportunities in the urban sector. The thesis that mechanization will lead to greater unemployment among landless labourers is rejected, for, while machinery may displace labour from some agricultural operations, on balance, farm modernization will increase employment by (1) stimulating greater intensity of cropping, and (2) enhancing the intensity of farm practices per crop; e.g., by resulting in a higher number of irrigations, ploughings, and weeding. Even if the demand for labour is somewhat decreased, agricultural labourers — like the small farmers and tenants — will willingly move off the land because they discover better opportunities in the urban sector. These opportunities will, in fact, be created, by the very agricultural revolution that drives them from the land.

Ludhiana presented an unusually favourable environment for the rapid modernization of the agricultural economy once modern techniques became available. Located in central Punjab, it forms part of the fertile Indo-Gangetic plain and has large quantities of good subsoil water (easily tapped through minor irrigation works). The fertile land and high water table facilitated the development of irrigation works: since most areas were equally capable of irrigation, popular support could be mobilised for large-scale programmes of land consolidation. This was carried out, leaving cultivators with compact and economic units for land development. By 1961, almost 50 per cent of the net cropped area was irrigated, mainly from

privately owned wells and tubewells.

In addition to these natural features, the district is densely populated. In 1961, a population of more than one million persons was concentrated in a small area of 1,324 square miles, resulting in a population density of 773 persons per square mile. The district also had the greatest concentration of small-scale industries of any area in the Punjab. Ludhiana city, with a population of some 240,000 was styled the "Small-scale Industrial Capital of India". It boasted hundreds of manufacturing enterprises in the fields of hosiery, cycles, machine tools, motor parts, agricultural machinery, oil engines and a variety of other consumer goods. Of the total population in the district, 31 per cent were classified as urban. Of the total work force, more than 65 per cent were employed outside of agriculture.

The rapidly growing rates of urbanization and industrialization were reflected in an unusually favourable land-man ratio for a high population density area. In 1961, there were 130,000 cultivators and agricultural labourers on a net cropped area of 662,500 acres, giving an availability of land per adult worker of approximately 5 acres. Moreover, taking into account only the households engaged in cultivation (some 46,000 farm families), there were fewer small-sized operational holdings in Ludhiana than in the state as a whole. Although the incidence of tenancy was high — even the official estimate being that 46 per cent of all cultivators took some land on lease — the proportion of "pure" tenants was believed to be only 4 per cent of the total.

The district had other advantages. Compared to a literacy rate of 24.2 per cent for Punjab State as a whole, the literacy percentage in Ludhiana was 36.3 per cent. Even in rural areas, almost 42 per cent of adult males were literate; among males working as cultivators, this proportion was 31 per cent. Yet another intangible factor has often been mentioned as an important element in the rapid progress of

Ludhiana and the state as a whole. The majority population, about 63 per cent, are members of the Sikh community, a religious group which separated from Hinduism in the 15th century as part of an effort to overturn Muslim domination. Initially organized for purposes of battle, the Sikhs have retained their reputation as an aggressive and innovative community. Many Sikhs still carry on the military tradition by serving in India's armed forces and many work for brief periods in Commonwealth countries to accumulate capital for investment. As a result, Sikhs are usually exposed to modern values and foreign ways and are a major source for promoting change when they return to their villages. In Ludhiana, the dominant landowning caste, the Jats, is drawn mainly from the Sikh community.

Of course, there are depressed groups in the district. In 1961, over 22 per cent of the population were former untouchables, Harijans or members of the Scheduled Castes. The overwhelming majority, 87 per cent, lived in rural areas, and constituted the major supply of village menials and agricultural labourers. Literacy among this group was lower than 14 per cent, almost the same as for agricultural labour, which was mainly recruited from the Harijan castes. However, even this group could nurture some hopes of social mobility. The few who managed to pass their matriculation or get a B.A. were eligible for appointment to a reserved place in government service, either as a peon or junior grade officer. Others could follow the traditional avenue of social mobility and join the army. Most important, the existence of good roads and transportation made it possible for some agricultural labourers to find alternative employment in local factories in Ludhiana city or other towns while still maintaining their homes in the village. According to the District Census Handbook, by 1961, there was a "dearth of agricultural labourers in the district because the growing industries afford the labour better opportunities and remuneration".

"In addition to all the above stated advantages that Punjab enjoys, the success of Punjab can best be understood if it is viewed as 'Punjab Incorporated', analogous to 'Japan Inc.'. Here an agricultural state, controlled by large and influential farmers, set out seriously to organize itself single-mindedly to bring prosperity to the 'company', and through it to its shareholders. The entire machinery of the state, from law and order to road-building, was geared to this single purpose and no excuses for lapses were tolerated. Even corruption was functional: it steered allocation of scarce resources e.g., fertilizers, to the highest bidder, who was forced to make the most efficient use of them. More specifically, the state:

1. bargained with the Central Government from a position of strength to obtain the maximum price for its grain 'exports';
2. streamlined the canal irrigation system and encouraged private tubewell construction;
3. electrified every village in the state and constructed roads which brought every village to within one mile of an all-weather road;
4. supported the organization of a first-rate agricultural university which did relevant research and produced trained manpower;
5. organized an efficient and sufficient extension service manned by young, technically competent workers who responded to the farmers' needs because they knew the state was serious about performance;
6. quickened the cycle of research, multiplication and distribution of high-yielding seeds;
7. organized an efficient system for the distribution of fertilizers, pesticides, credit and farm machinery;
8. covered the state with regulated market yards and a powerful state purchase machinery (Marketing Federation) which dominated the transactions;

9. streamlined the administration to provide a single line of command;
10. maintained law and order which could have posed a problem due to obviously increasing disparities.**

When the I.A.D.P. was started in Ludhiana district in 1961, crop demonstrations showing increased yields of 40 to 65 per cent per acre with the application of the improved "package of practices" quickly convinced all categories of farmers of the superiority of modern methods. Data collected during this period reveals that small farmers did not lag very much behind larger cultivators in their willingness to adopt modern methods. The major constraint on the small cultivator was not conservative resistance to change but limited resources. This is indirectly illustrated by the wide disparities in the size of average loans borrowed by small and large farmers from both governmental and cooperative agencies during 1963-64. Cultivators having 5 acres or less received an average advance of Rs.39.17. By contrast, farmers with holdings of 20 acres or more borrowed Rs.517.63.

Nevertheless, during the first years of the I.A.D.P., at least some farmers in all size categories were able to take advantage of the intensive development programme to increase yields per acre through the application of modern methods, especially chemical fertilizers. At the same time, a serious disparity rapidly emerged between the large farmers with holdings of 20 acres or more, and the majority of other cultivators.

Optimum increase in yield levels with the new package of inputs, improved seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides depended on the availability of an assured water supply. Canal irrigation covering only some 17 per cent of the area under crops (water from which was itself dependent on the

*Development Dialogue

monsoons), the introduction of modern practices required the installation of minor irrigation works, especially percolation wells, pumpsets, and tubewells. Large capital investments in land improvement were a pre-requisite. The cost of installation of the smallest tubewell, one commanding an area of about 20 to 25 acres, was about Rs.4,000 to Rs.6,000. Cultivators belonging to the groups with the largest holdings already tended to have private tubewells. Only those with 20 acres or more were in a position either to finance new minor irrigation works from their own savings or to finance agricultural investment through loans.

As a result, during the first phase of agricultural modernization in Ludhiana, i.e., prior to the introduction of the high-yielding varieties, the large farmers with holdings of 20 acres or more made the greatest gains. It became possible for them to replace less profitable crops like wheat plus gram mixture, and gram, with more paying wheat. A substantial increase in wheat production in Ludhiana between 1960-61 and 1965-66 came from a striking shift in the cropping pattern accruing to the large cultivators. By contrast, the gains of small farmers were limited to some improvement in yields during good weather years.

The advent of the new dwarf varieties of Mexican wheat in 1966-67 marked the beginning of a second stage of agricultural development in Ludhiana district that opened unprecedented opportunities for increasing net returns to farm management. On the average, Ludhiana farmers who adopted the high-yielding varieties in 1966-67 doubled their output, and in one swoop, increased their net income by over 70 per cent. Between 1966-67 and 1967-68, the area growing Mexican varieties jumped from 18,000 acres to 245,000 acres. Large farmers (with 20 acres or more) were the first to adopt these high-yielding varieties. The successful cultivation of the dwarf wheats depends even more heavily on assured supplies of water.

In fact, irrigation at fixed times in the growth cycle of the plant is essential to the realization of its high-yield potential. New wheats also require some sophisticated farm equipment to produce optimum yields — improved ploughs, discs, and harrows for proper land levelling; seed and fertilizer drills for shallow planting and exact spacing of seedlings; and plant protection equipment to ward off rusts and other diseases. Only the large farmers, most of whom had already made capital investments in tubewells and improved equipment were initially in a position to adopt the new high-yielding seed varieties. Many were able to double (or even treble) their output and net income with very little extra capital outlay. Some made even more spectacular gains. With the release of more disease-resistant Mexican varieties (PV 18, S 227, and S 308) in 1967-68, there was such a high demand for scarce supplies that many cultivators took up production of seed rather than grain, and sold their stocks at "fantastic" prices of about Rs.150 per quintal. Most important, the large farmers used a substantial part of their additional income from the dwarf wheats for reinvestment in the land, and for the purchase of agricultural machinery — tractors, threshers, and seed drills. The replacement of bullock power with tractors and threshers made agriculture more efficient. There was also a diversification of cropping in order to include more profitable commercial crops like sugarcane, cotton and orchards. Some also used their capital to establish ancillary enterprises like poultry-farming, or even to start small-scale industries e.g., dealerships in spare parts for the new machinery that came flooding into the villages. Farmers with very substantial holdings of 50 acres or more, experienced a qualitative change in their standard of life, representing a new departure for rural India.

All this is not to say that smaller farmers, those with holdings of 10 to 20 acres have not adopted the high-yielding varieties. They have, and in overwhelming numbers.

But the circumstances under which the small farmers have done so — especially those with 10 to 15 acres — sharply limit their gains. Probably the greatest aid to the smaller farmer in adopting the high-yielding varieties was the relaxation of criteria for eligibility for tubewell loans both by government agencies and land mortgage banks. Again, it is this class of cultivator that relies most heavily on the cooperatives for financing the costlier inputs required by the high-yielding varieties. But a substantial part of the profits on such small farms is siphoned off by debt repayment. Once having incurred this indebtedness, the small farmer is at a disadvantage in maximizing returns to his investment. The small size of the farm necessarily denies the small farmer the economies of scale enjoyed by larger landowners. The returns to investment in a tubewell are lower. Size is also a crucial constraint to mechanization. Nevertheless, the majority of loan applications received for tractors by the Pilot Project Officer comes from farmers with 15 acres or less. Despite the confidence of the small farmer, the Land Mortgage Bank has viewed the recent trend with mounting alarm. In fact, so concerned did the Bank become at the large number of small farmers taking loans for tractors that as of March 1969, that it was decided to limit the percentage of loans allocated for tractors to 15 per cent of the total advanced.

Returns to the small farmer from the introduction of the high-yielding varieties are apt to be less than on larger farms because, first, considering the high costs involved, they are less likely to use optimum doses of chemical fertilizer, and to achieve the maximum yield potential. This is indirectly confirmed by the decrease in average yields per acre of Mexican wheats reported in 1968-69 compared to 1966-67, from 20 quintals an acre to 14 quintals. In the earlier year, mainly large farmers were involved; two years later, almost all cultivators had adopted the new varieties. Second, the cost of the inputs have themselves increased over

the last few years, so that returns to investment are now less.

In Ludhiana, however, it is the bottom 20 percent of cultivators with holdings of less than 10 acres, who have fared worst as a result of the green revolution. These farmers may have been able to make some marginal gains in good weather years by applying small additional doses of chemical fertilizer to Mexican wheats, but, in general, have not been able to sustain the indivisible inputs — tubewells and agricultural machinery. Actually, there is some reason to believe that their position may have suffered an absolute deterioration as a result of the green revolution.

The position of tenants has definitely become more difficult. With profits from direct cultivation rising, there are now more farmers who want to lease in land than out. Farmers now find a positive advantage in larger units of management. Those large farmers who still give out some land on lease demand a premium in higher rents. Compared to six years ago, cash rents on leased land have increased from about Rs. 300-Rs. 350 to Rs. 500 per acre. More commonly, sharecropping arrangements are made. In some cases, the traditional rate of a 50-50 division of gross output between the owner and the tenant is maintained; the owner may also pay half the cost of fertilizers and diesel for irrigation. But not all tenants are so fortunate. Landowners may ask for a 70 per cent share of the crop, arguing that with new methods, the tenant still receives a larger absolute portion from 30 per cent of a higher output than 50 per cent of a lower one. But since most small owner-cum-tenant cultivators cannot afford to invest in optimum production practices, they find the new rentals uneconomic, and are gradually forced to give up as cultivators. One solution has been to "rent" out small holdings of 2 to 4 acres to large farmers, who then supply the actual owners with modern inputs for cultivation and take 50 per cent of the crop as their share. Some small owners have decided to take advantage of rising land values and sell their holdings, either to liquidate

debts, or to start a new enterprise, such as poultry farming. Pure tenants, those with no land or bullocks to sell or "rent" are in the worst position. They may be taken on as a share cropper by a large farmer who supplies all the inputs, and pays the tenant 20 per cent of the crop as his share.

At first glance the situation after the green revolution appears to be favourable for the landless labourers. Off season, employment opportunities (construction of houses, roads, tubewells etc.) seem to have increased. Employment is available all the year round; cash wages for casual labour has increased. But the situation is more complex. The real level of the landless labourers' well-being cannot be judged in terms of cash earnings which are devalued with inflation, by the market price of the crop share received at harvest. Initially, the introduction of the high-yielding varieties enhanced the economic position of agricultural labourers by increasing their bargaining position at harvest time. Large farmers engaged in multiple cropping were greatly concerned with speedy harvesting of standing crops. With larger crops to handle, more labourers were required to complete the job within the allotted time. Finally, whereas the local varieties could be harvested over a period of 20 days or so, the dwarf wheats tend to shatter unless they are harvested within 10 or 15 days. With such a high premium placed on timely labour, agricultural workers attempted to exploit their new advantage by bargaining with landowners for increased wages, often threatening to work elsewhere if their terms were not met. With migratory labour also available, these techniques were only partially successful.

Far from believing that the labourers deserve any increase in wages, landowners are convinced that with the output of the new varieties roughly doubled, they would be justified in reducing the labourers' customary crop share from $1/20$ to $1/40$ of the harvest. The labourers, for their

part, assert that they would share in the increased output in the same proportion as the landowners i.e., that the traditional rate of $1/20$ should be maintained. Over the last couple of years, a compromise has been struck which has seen the customary rate reduced from $1/20$ to $1/30$. Agricultural labourers now receive every thirteen bundle they tie before putting the grain on the threshing floor. Their gains under this formula are limited but real.

Unfortunately, these gains are likely to cost the labourers dearly in the future. Already, landowners are resentful at what they consider the labourer's blackmailing tactics. They have agreed to pay the higher wages, but have retaliated by applying other economic pressures -- denying labourers traditional rights of taking fodder from the fields for their animals, or additional payments in kind of fuel and vegetables. A greater hardship for many labourers is the landowners' refusal to advance interest-free loans because of the labourers' adopting "bargaining tactics". More serious is the landowners' determination reinforced by rising prices, for foodgrains, to convert all kind payments into cash. They have already succeeded in substituting cash for the traditional payment in kind given for winnowing operations, and they clearly intend to press this pattern for harvesting operations as well.

In other states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where over 80 per cent of cultivating households operate holdings of less than 10 acres, where 15 per cent to 30 per cent of workers in agriculture are labourers, and where the level of industrial development is still very low, it is difficult to see how more than a small section of the agricultural population will be able to realize significant benefits from the wheat revolution. By comparison with the Punjab, gains in these areas are likely to be even more heavily weighted, increases in disparities larger, and the rate of displacement greater than can reasonably be expected to be absorbed through the creation of alternative job opportunities outside agriculture.

Occurring as these changes are in a social context characterized by an erosion in traditional ties, and an incipient polarisation on the basis of class, it would not be surprising if efforts by political parties to mobilise social discontent for power purposes would lead to increasing instances of class confrontation in rural areas.

In the rice belt, where each of these problems is magnified several fold, and all tend to occur together, the dilemma of ensuring a reasonable degree of equity in the distribution of gains from the new technology is even more formidable — as is likely to be the law and order problem arising from a failure to do so. This emerges clearly from a consideration of agricultural modernization and social change in the predominantly paddy growing districts of West Godavary, Thanjavur, Palghat, and Burdwan.

The I.L.O. Study of 1977 — "Poverty and Landlessness in Asia" — points out that "during the period studied there was a significant rise in the per capita consumption from Rs.25.8 per month in 1960-61 to Rs.28.5 in 1970-71 at 1960-61 prices. The data indicates an absolute decline in consumption levels in the three poorest deciles of the population." In Uttar Pradesh "there has been a sharp rise in the proportion of landless labourers in the rural areas, which cannot be explained by demographic factors alone. Population during the same period rose by 20 per cent but there was a 65 per cent increase in the number of landless labourers. During the decade of the 1960's, the proportion of the rural population living below the poverty line increased from slightly less than 27 million to slightly more than 48 million." (I.L.O.)

The green revolution which attempted to boost production has, in fact, resulted in the continuous deterioration in the condition of the small peasants and landless labourers. This programme for technical revolution first developed and propagated by Ford and Rockefeller Foundations has moved

peasants away from their self-sustaining local production consumption systems into distant market networks and institutions that are alien to them. The "increased food production" has not changed the situation of the hunger of people in India. As Ajit Roy points out, "even the foodgrain reserves of 18 million tonnes in 1978 was but a measure of the hunger of the people — not an indicator of the improved food situation.

CHAPTER II

INDUSTRIALIZATION: its unintended side effects

In India today, as mentioned earlier, industrial output is over four times its 1950 volume. New industries have come up. We are producing three times more coal, five times more pig iron and steel, seven times more cement, seventeen times more electricity and over a hundred times more fertilizer.* The Indian economy has quite obviously grown much faster and has been more widespread in post-independence years than in the period of relative stagnation during the last century. The growth experience however over the various five-year plans has not been uniform. Two distinct phases in India's economy can broadly be identified — one starting from the first plan upto the end of the third plan and the other beyond the third plan upto the present.

During the first period, the momentum of overall economic growth was achieved by rapid expansion in the industrial sector. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 envisaged the state to be the main instrument of industrial transformation. The main responsibility of developing the core industries which are of basic and strategic nature was vested with the state. The state was further expected to play a leading role in the development of engineering goods (like machine-making and metals).

The preamble to the constitution of India and the directive principles of the state policy state, among other things, that state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing that:

- (a) the ownership and control of material resources of the community are so distributed as best to secure the common good;

* J Patel, Planned Development in India
Mainstream, Jan. 26, 1980.

- (b) the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production. Further it indicates the acceptance by Parliament in December 1954 of the socialist pattern of society as the objective of social and economic policy.

In the first phase starting with initial conditions of lack of social overhead capital, stagnant export, low savings, votes, technical backwardness etc., economic growth was accompanied by a remarkable structural breakthrough due to (i) the creation of overhead capital and industrial infrastructure, (ii) scientific and technological capabilities including the high levels of technical and skilled manpower, and (iii) increasing the levels of back savings and gross investment in national economy. In this period the momentum in economic growth was achieved by rapid expansion in the industrial sector in which the most dynamic sector was capital goods industry. This was done with the deliberate choice of investment in favour of heavy industrialization. Data shows that in the second phase after 1964-65, for almost the whole of next decade, the economy experienced relative stagnancy in industrial production. There was a marked increase in public consumption and a consequent rapid increase in the services sector. Between 1964-65 and 1974-75, more than one-third of the total increase in gross domestic product was accounted for by the services sector which turned out to be the most dynamic sector of growth. There was quite obviously a greater steadiness in the annual growth rate during the first four years and one of the most glaring aspects of "development" of the second phase is manifest in the decline in the growth output in the organized industry accompanied by sluggish investment, vast under-utilization of capacity and major increase in employment in organized industry. During this period the annual growth rate was about 4.1 per cent including the 10.6 per cent increase in 1976 excluding which the average would work out to 3.7 per cent.

Thus we notice on the one hand, a sharp decline in the rate of growth of industrial output since the mid-sixties and the existence of large unutilized manufacturing capacity, on the other. Within the industrial sector, the structural retardation has taken place at two stages. First, the growth of basic and capital goods has been slower than in the past and also slower than even the meagre average growth in industrial output. Secondly, where growth has been moderately high, a majority of the industries belonged either directly or indirectly to the elite-oriented consumption goods sector. Output of industries catering to the requirements of mass consumption like cotton textiles, has gone up only marginally. Even within cotton textiles, the share of coarse varieties of cloth has declined drastically. The most damaging aspects of the development of this latter period are a steady decline in the per capita domestic availability of key wage goods and the increase in number of people below poverty line.

This changed phenomenon can be appreciated if we look at the progress made by some individual industries. The entire ferrous metals group viz. pig iron, steel ingots, finished steel, steel castings and forgings, steel pipes and tubes, which are the pace-setters for industrialization followed by the whole gamut of mechanical engineering industries including a wide variety of industrial machinery, machine tools and railway equipment, cement, refractories, paper, etc. These showed impressive growth rates prior to the mid-sixties. The growth thereafter has been stifled to such an extent that for many years after 1965-66 their output remained lower than in 1956-66. The average annual increase between 1966-67 and 1976-77 is almost insignificant compared with the average from the previous 5-year period.

During the same period many industries which cater to the

requirements of the rich and the upper middle class have registered phenomenal growth rates. Although no systematic data is available with respect to individual industrial items, it is quite apparent that disproportionately large increases in the output of man-made fabrics, beverages, perfumes and cosmetics, commercial, office and household equipment etc. all signify the emergence of an output structure that is significantly getting elite-oriented. The result of this trend has been that large amounts of investable resources have directly or indirectly been appropriated by this sector at the expense of the most basic capital and intermediary goods and industries. The establishment of a vast network of luxury hotels and breweries and units producing perfumes and cosmetics, tooth paste and tooth powder, baby food, radio sets, refrigerators, room air-conditioners, all at the cost of allocation of investible funds for mass consumption goods bears testimony to this phenomenon.

In the year 1976-77 when the output of coal increased by 2.1 per cent, of cotton and yarn by 1.8 per cent, of cotton cloth in the decentralized sector by 2.7 per cent, soap by 4.9 per cent, cloth production in the mill sector actually declined by 0.7 per cent, but output of beer rose by 66.2 per cent, toothpaste by 56.3 per cent, infant formula milk food and biscuits by 23.0 per cent each and cigarettes by 10.9 per cent. In the transport equipment sector, the production of railway wagons decreased by 1.6 per cent and railway locomotives by 3.9 per cent, and the output of commercial vehicles rose by 6.1 per cent and of bicycles by 13.2 per cent. As against this, production of cars shot up by 67.8 per cent, scooters by 39.0 per cent, jeeps by 17.3 per cent. In the chemicals and petro-chemicals group (other than fertilizer), output of basic products like caustic soda and soda ash increased by 8.1 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively while polyester fibre output increased by 36.9 per cent, polyethylene by 45.7 per cent, optical brushing powder by 39.9 per cent. In the non-electrical

machinery sector the highest increases in production took place in room air conditioners by 108.4 per cent, airconditioning and refrigeration plants (39.0 per cent) and domestic refrigeration (34.4 per cent). While some machinery items have shown significant expansion in output, the reduction of input in paper machinery (-16.7 per cent) of heavy machinery (-7.5 per cent) of diesel engines - stationary- (-18.4 per cent and a whole set of metal products is a pointer to the kind of distortion in the production and investment structure. Among the non metallic products, while cement output uncreased bu only 9 per cent and refactories by 8.1 per cent, glazed tile production expanded by 42.5 per cent and sheet and plate glass by 54.9 per cent.

In this respect one glaring example of distortion is the change in the pattern of output of different varieties of cloth in the mills sector. The total output of coarse and midium varieties of cloth in 1950 was 50.4 per cent. By 1971 it had declined to 38.9 per cent. The story of cotton cloth production is only one among the many underlining how progressively, production has moved against the requirements of the masses. "Industrialization if it is to lead to the removal of povery must fulfil three broad purposes: it must produce goods for mass consumption, generate employment on a large and expanding scale and not disrupt the life of the common people but on the contrary lead to the growth of self reliance at the local level. " The essential problem with Indian industrialization is that it is doing none of these things.

"A need is what people require; a demand, what asserts itself in the market through money. A private industrialist is not a philanthropist. Refrigerators, cars and TV sets are manufactured not because they are needed but because a minority has the money to back their demant inthe market. This however, does not alter the reality that the demand base in India is very narrow and this has been the cause of stagnation in the economy despite the emphasis on luxury items. Since 1966 industrial production has been growing at the approximate rate of 3 per cent which is only slightly higher than the rate of population growth."

Poverty infact has not neen removed by the rapid industrial growth and unemployment has reached alarming proportions (now admitted to be to the order of 20 million. This can be related to the fact that Indian industrialization is predominantly capital intensive in orientation and more fundamentally to the fact that if it creates new jobs for some, it throws out many more from old and traditional ones."

Finally if industrialization should not disrupt lives but instead generate self reliance and self confidence, again the picture that we find in India is very different." The pattern of industrialization has in fact disrupted lives. Some cases of this have been "hasty and illegal" - more so than others - but the overall pattern remains the same. Every time a new factory has been set up people are dispossessed of their lands "legally" of course. An industry or even a township comes up in their midst and the exploitation of local resources is done by outsiders. The final product is never for local consumption but for sale in an alien market. Even employment provided for local people is marginal because skilled labour is more easily imported from the towns than developed in the villages. When industrialization was initiated after independence in a big way, it was thought that it would have a "spread effect" and that benefits would radiate from the industrial centre to the neighbouring villages. Myrdal has pointed out how instead, Indian industrialization has been producing "backwash effects" with men and resources being sucked in by the industry thus impoverishing the neighbourhood." *

The elitist nature of Indian industry has been clearly demonstrated in earlier paragraphs. The latter two reasons for the inability of Indian industry to remove poverty have been illustrated by concrete examples of two cases. A study of the tribals in Pampoh shows the disruptive effects of industrialization on the local people. Information on the effects of technology transfer on the employment of women shows how women have become the victims of industrialization and modernization in India.

CASE STUDY I

INDUSTRIALIZATION: The tribal dilemma

Pamposh sub division of Sundergahad district in Orissa where the Rourkela industrial complex is located, is bounded by Ranchi district in the north, Singhbhum district in the East, Bonai sub division in the south and Sunderghad sub division in the west. It has an area of 1,840 sq KM and a population of a little over 40,000. The tribals constitute a little over 43.1 per cent of this population. The principal tribes are the Oraons and Mundas. Their major occupation has been agriculture and both tribes have long been settled cultivators. They practiced rice cultivation in the main but also horticulture and produced various kinds of vegetables which they sold in the local market. What is distinct about their agricultural practice is the cooperative endeavour, group solidarity and reciprocal obligation - characteristics flowing from communal tenure of land which was once practiced. These characteristics mark their economic pursuits as well.

Agricultural operation, for instance began on the advice of the pahan who was the religious headman. Women jointly undertook weeding and transplantation activities by turns in the different fields. Even in ceremonial hunting and fishing operations, the villagers acted as a group and the catch was shared according to customary rules. The social life of these communities was chiefly characterized by group solidarity and cohesion. In both communities the members of various social groups were knit together by many bonds. For instance, the family in both communities, was generally compound in nature, though the authority of the father was supreme.

Members of various groups were divided into different sets and each such set was headed by a Raja at the top, assisted by a number of officials who were charged with the responsibility of enforcing an endogamy and other related norms. Inter and intra villages called village panchayat and "Parha Panchayat" were invested with legislative, executive and judicial powers. The secular headman (Mahato among the Oraons and Munda among the Mundas), the sacred headman Pahan at the village level and Parha Raja at the Parha level, were the chief functionaries of these

bodies. They not only regulated the relations of the various members within the village but also conditioned their life in the outside world. In addition to all these, there were the common dancing places called Akhara and youth dormitories whose duty was to pass on traditional knowledge and values from one generation to the next and develop qualities of leadership. Thus the whole socio economic life of these people was interwoven with the many forces of cooperation. It is against this background that the problems encountered by them and the consequences that followed, must be viewed.

With the initiation of the Hindustan Steel Plant at Rourkela in 1953 - 1954, not only was agriculture replaced, but the entire cooperative endeavour and group solidarity upon which their economy revolved, undermined. Industrialization requires vast chunks of land that is realized by displacement and disruption. This is what happened in the Rourkela industrial area. As many as 3,000 families from 32 tribal communities - a population of 15,562, 1951 census - were uprooted for the location of the steel plant, alone, not to mention the consequences of the other ancillary industries like the Orissa Cement and Fertiliser plants, etc., which grew subsequently. Several thousand families were thus deprived of their livelihood. The land which had provided sustenance for generations was taken away overnight. This abrupt and forcible deprivation of their mainstay, ancestral property with which tribals rarely part, pushed the tribals into a state of insecurity.

It might be argued that the displaced tribals were given compensation in cash, besides land for continuing their traditional occupation and to put up their dwelling places. In most cases the compensation paid ranged from Rs 200 to 900 per acre depending on the quality of land. This was obviously too little to afford any prolonged sustenance. The land given was almost all in hilly tracts without any irrigation facilities, and situated at long distances (10 miles) from their housing sites. The tribals exhausted their little cash in the construction of their dwellings and could ill afford to have their agricultural lands reclaimed so as to pursue their traditional occupations. Hence they had no alternative but to look for alternative employment in the new industry. This too they were unable to get.

The tribals who are mostly illiterate could not be absorbed into

any of the technical posts. Even for the low posts like peons and chowkidars, they had to face competition from their non tribal counterparts besides being subjected to the prejudices and indifference of the non-tribal recruiting officials. Therefore, the displaced tribals staged angry demonstrations and dharnas in which they attempted to bring under cultivation some of their lands around the steel plant. The intervention of the then union minister T.N. Singh was necessary to bring the situation under control.

As a result of this intervention, an understanding called the T.N. Singh Formula was reached between the management of the plant and the displaced people whereby the plant was committed to providing employment to one person in every displaced family in turn and the displaced person had to vacate the lands which they had forcibly occupied. This plan however, could not undo the wrongs that had been done. Only about 400 families were given jobs of some kind. The vast majority were left to the mercy of the unscrupulous contractors and their agents. Even if the formula had been completely implemented, it would not have solved the problem, for the old occupation of agriculture engaged almost every member of each family in some sort of work or the other. By the new formula the bulk of the manpower has been left unutilised, leading to increased dependence, malnutrition and discord.

Further there was such a gap between the tribals' carefree life of the past and their present alienated life in an industrial setting that even the few tribals who secured jobs in the industry often absented themselves or absconded for days together especially after receiving their salaries, irrespective of whether they had leave to their credit or not. This unauthorised leave meant they lost their salaries for these days and if this exceeds a consecutive period of 15 days, the employee is liable to dismissal. Observation in the field shows that there is hardly any tribal who receives full wages for a month and in cases of those who have lost their jobs for consecutive leave are quite common.

With the steel plant and the consequent development of the township, has widened the scope for their employment in other areas and considerably increased temptation. There has been an inflow of

tribals from the villages to the town and this has had a devastating effect on their economy, based as it is on cooperative endeavour. Those left behind in the villages find it difficult to carry on their agricultural pursuits, let alone their ceremonial hunting and fishing operations which have thus almost disappeared. The tribals neither have the ready cash to hire the labour required for agriculture, nor is such labour readily available. As a result the tribal villages have become dry and drab ... and the out migration increases. Most of the tribals turn to the industry and become prey to the contractors as hired labour seeking daily wages. Contractors pay Rs 2 to Rs 2.50 per day and some times even less because of the abundantly available labour. Work is hard and wages low.

Without a fixed and adequate income, tribals have no savings. This forces them to borrow even for their daily living. They fall prey to moneylenders who charge interest rates to the tune of 100 per cent and once caught in their clutches, tribals have no escape. The money lender insists on prompt repayment of this never ending loan which he collects every month standing outside the gates of the factory. In case of default the money lender, taking undue advantage of the tribals' ignorance, charges compound interest. In the rare cases when the tribal refuses to pay or seeks time, the money lender harrasses the tribal both on his way to and back from work. Sometimes, when the tribal gets a government loan the moneylender receives advance information and with his agents, ambushes the tribal and snatches the money away. There are innumerable instances of tribals leaving their jobs for fear of being harassed or man handled or of all their belongings being taken away.

Culturally and socially the transition to industrialization has been a shock. Many of the tribals whose social life was one of cohesion have been drawn into the industrial economy through displacement or migration. They face a life that is segmented and heterogeneous. It is not merely that the tribals have to get adjusted to new relations of production and disciplines of the division of labour in the industrial setting, but the sources of their emotional energy and identity are no longer there to sustain them.

In the allotment of land, it is found that people with superior means have been given larger plots. These are always the non tribals. The tribals traditionally accommodated every adult after

marriage in a separate place that is carved out at will in the hills. Mounting land values made this impossible. Above all these colonies on the town's periphery are devoid of facilities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity, etc. The slums, besides being the breeding ground for alcoholism and crime are too poorly made to shelter the inhabitants even from sun and rain. When the plight of these tribals who enjoy some element of government patronage is this the condition of the major segment of the labour force brought into Rourkela town can be well imagined.

CASE STUDY II

INDUSTRIALIZATION : Its impact on Women

It is a well accepted fact that the status of women in a society is an important indicator of the level of development in that society. Numerous criteria may be used to determine this status - legal standing, education, the availability of facilities, crime rates among and against women, prostitution, birth rates, demographic transitions, etc. But by far the most crucial is women's participation in economic activity.

"It is a fact that most planners in the third world have ignored women when planning development, thus strengthening the process of increasing alienation between women's needs and the economic process, widening the gap between the home and economic activity. Planning activity has basically had a middle class bias where entry into the labour force was seen as a new right which would follow education. The productive roles played by lower class women have been ignored because of the emphasis on the concept of "gainful employment", the divorce between domestic work and economic activity, wage labour and self employment, production and consumption, formal and informal markets, use value and exchange value, subsistence and market production etc. The blindness of planners to women's traditional productive and managerial roles is most clearly manifest in their initial exclusion from the community development programmes. Women were brought in at the insistence of the West Bengal government, but only as targets of home improvement activity. As the programme got directed to raising agri-

cultural productivity, this womens' programme assumed marginal priority. Agricultural extension workers did not include women even in areas where womens role in agriculture was greater than that of men.

It is obvious that womens' development is not seen as a process that would contribute directly to economic growth but more as a symbolic gesture of the countries progressive stance. The increasing inequality caused by rising poverty has contributed to the further devaluation of women. The oppression of poverty removes all social values associates with the protection and dignity of women and widens the scope of exploitation. The extent to which the increasing exclusion of women from economically productive or gainful employment has contributed to the growth of mass poverty remains to be measured but it is more than obvious today that women have been displaced by men, machines and chemicals.

The development of modern industries, infact the whole process of industrialization has been based on the attempt to maximize labour productivity through automation. This has led to increasing capital intensive patterns of production which has for most part met with success in the accomplishing of the objective. The fact remains however, that in this game the dice has been loaded against women. There has been a direct replacement of labour by capital and modern methods of rationalization. This has been particularly rapid in view of the artificial distortion and cheapening of the market. One can observe the abundantly made available credit, capital by glancing at the increasing debt component of the capital structure,** of the Indian corporate sector. Rising labour productivity ratios also speak of this.*** With the elimination of jobs initially occupied by women, the replacement being made in some other category of skills (much reduced in size), women in time have been rendered "unemployable" in the organized sector due to their lack of skills in these alternative jobs. The situation is deteriorated with the fact that in the social structure much preference is given to the male for the acquisition of skills required by modern industry rather than to women who remain unskilled, untrained and therefore unemployable. ****

Sarathy Acharya, Impact of Technology Transfer on Women. ICSSR

* RBI Financial Statistics of Joint Stock Companies 1975

*** NPC Productivity Trends in the Cotton Textile Industry, 1976 and Productivity Trends in the Cement Industry 1976

**** Women in India, A Statistical Profile, GOI, 1978

Information used herein has been drawn mainly from the Artical mantioned.

In an attempt to maximize net value added per worker, the employer tend to discriminate against women. This is because under the Industrial Regulations Act women workers are to be provided with certain basic facilities like creches, women's toilets, etc., which increase the per worker cost. This also occurs because of the fact that the Act also speaks of equal pay for equal work, though women can not be employed at all odd hours of the day. Lastly, with the diminishing use of labour in the industrial sector, less persons are involved in jobs that give a periodical wage and provide opportunity for bringing in social transformation and change in value structures through better incomes, trade union activities, etc. Thus with increased activity in the organized industry, the employment has not increased inspite of rapid growth in the population. The majority of the population is therefore occupied in occupations of subsistence which offer little or no opportunity for social change or human development.

Employment in industry

In 1950 the total employment in the organized sector was 2.5 million out of which the women's employment was about 0.28 million, (about 11.4 per cent of the total). In 1974 these figures reached 4.7 million and 0.44 million respectively, with the percentage being 9.5. There is a fall of about 2 per cent in the women's employment ratios over the 1950 - '74 period which in percentage may look small but in absolute numbers means a loss of about 90 thousand employment opportunities for women. Total employment has increased by about 88 per cent over the quarter century while women's employment increased by only about 55 - 60 per cent.

This however, does not present the total picture. The number of employed persons during this period increased by about 2.2 million out of which women constituted 0.16 million and men 2.03 million. Over this period of industrialization for every job created for women, about 12 were created for men. Similarly, the non metallic products industry has almost doubled its women's employment from about 14 thousand in 1950 to about 26 thousand in 1974. The textile industry is the one where womens employment has actually decreased to almost half from

about 102 thousand to about 59 thousand over 1950 - 70 the agriculture and allied activities industry has managed to maintain almost the same level of employment for women. The food and tobacco industries have been the only ones in which there has been an appreciable increase in women's employment. In 1970, 66 per cent of the employees were women and a quarter in food. The figure in food rose from 58000 in 1950 to 138, thousand in 1970 and 1549 thousand in 1974. The numbers of those employed in tobacco rose from 43.7 thousand to 66 thousand. The figures in electricals have shown an increase from 3.8 per cent in 1950 to 6.8 per cent in 1970 but the absolute size of the proportion is too small to conclude upon its human factor demand. Employment of women in absolute terms was 16 thousand in 1974. However, an important comment may be added here. The electrical industry operates in a big way in the unorganized sector and the linkages between the organized and unorganized sector are quite substantial. There happens to be a large number of women employed in the unorganized sector which feeds the other.

Chemical, chemical products and non metallic mineral products' industry show an increase in women's employment from 27 thousand employed in 1974 as against 8.7 thousand in 1950. They however, show a marginal decrease in women's employment. Since 1947, these non traditional industries have grown at a faster rate than the traditional ones. This shows that there has been a technological influence in these industries which is not conducive to the women labour absorption. This is also evident from the large increases in the total employment figures in these industries.

The textile industry, though a traditional one, has undergone numerous technological changes. The figures show hardly a 10 per cent increase in the total employment over a ten year period, with women's employment virtually reduced to half and the proportion falling from about 10 per cent to about five. The textile industry was at its boom in the early sixties with production increasing by about 50 per cent over 1956 - 1970. Production in the non mill sector also increased throughout. From a seventyfive per cent production share in the mill sector in 1956, it decreased to a mere 53 per cent in 1970. This clearly shows that growth has occurred largely in the non mills sector. This could be a reason why the employment figures are so depressed in the mills sector (as the Factories Act 1948 may

not cover the whole of the non mill sector).

The traditional industries, viz processes allied to agriculture food and tobacco do not seem to have many women replacing technology though some reports do talk about foreign transfer of technology in the food industry. Even if labour displacing technological changes are not ruled out in these industries the new skill composition has not hit womens' employment exclusively. This is particularly true for the agriculture and allied food industries, where over 21 years the total employment has increased only by about 23 per cent.

Between 1951 and 1974, the total employment in mines has been less than a million at any time. It increased from 549 thousand to 746 thousand over the 24 years, an increase of 35 per cent in the reference period. Womens employment has however, gradually decreased both in absolute numbers and proportions over these years. The possible causes for this were that after independence women's employment under ground was not permitted but it must be pointed out that till 1940 women did work underground in the mines. There was no sudden fall in the employment of women after this regulation came into force in 1949. Infact the rate decreased after this regulation. This evidence from the whole industry indicates that factors other than this regulation are responsible for the fall in women's employment. Ther is enough evidence* to show that modernization of mines in India has occured aver years. As the figures shou labour substituting devices have been used in the post independence years. However, considering the hazardous nature of the jobs in mines automation of mining operations are warrented. Coal mines employ the largest number of persons in the mines sector in India. The trend shows a gradual increase in employment from ~~352~~ thousand in 1951 to 450 thousand in 1963 , a decrease to about 391 thousand in 1970 and again an increase there after to 505 thousand in 1974. Womens employment has followed a trend of gradual decrease till 1971 when it had less than halved from about 55 thousand in 1951 to about 21 thousand in 1970 when it rapidly rose to about 43 thousand in 1974.

The employment of women in coal had dropped considerably until the mines were nationalized in the early seventies. All mines except the limestone mines have shown a fall in women's employment trends. In some cases like iron ore and coal, mica and manganese , womens'

has fallen, in the former the total employment has increased while in the latter both total employment and women's employment have fallen. In view of the positive growth achieved in the mining sector, the falling rates of employment, especially of women may be traced to the use of labour displacing methods.

During the eight-year period (1950-58) total employment has increased by about 25 per cent giving an average growth rate of about three per cent per year. During the same period women's employment has increased by about 22 per cent. As against this, output has increased by 50 - 60 per cent, energy use by about 90 per cent and capital accumulation by about 160 per cent, over the same period. Thus on an average there has been more than a six times difference between the additional capital accumulation and labour use. One pertinent observation is that capital has accumulated fastest, fuel consumption at an increasing rate and the lowest growth rate amongst the factors of production is that of employment, with the women employment being still lower.

For the years 1959-70, the contrast is more sharp. Capital growth in this period has been more than 550 per cent, output growth about 170 per cent, the energy consumption slightly more, while employment growth has been merely 33 per cent. Women's employment has grown less than 15 per cent over these twelve years. The sheer labour substitution by capital has been responsible for the poor employment generation. This evidence is supported by the fact that the output has been able to increase at a level less than half that of the growth capital accumulation and total productivity has not shown any such trends. There is evidence to the fact that the manufacturing activity has been adopting a technology which is more and more capital-intensive. (Even though data on skill levels is not available, it would not be wrong to also conclude that the gap in the growth of total employment and women-employment could be both due to unavailability of skilled women labour and the otherwise reluctance to employ women due to cost escalations).

The coal mines' figures show about 150 per cent increase in output, more than 300 per cent rise in the case of energy, while only about 45 per cent in employment over 1951-74. The component

of women's employment has actually decreased by about 20 per cent. While the iron ore mines show a steady rise of output by more than 12-fold, both the total and women's employment show inverted U-shaped profiles. For limestone mines, the output has increased more than 12-fold over the 22 years period while the employment has slightly more than trippled, with the women employment having less than doubled. Both mica and manganese mines have shown erratic output growth rates but their employment have shown an almost steady decrease. The use of energy in both coal and non-coal mines has increased more than four-fold.

The mining sector shows a general fall in women's employment, a minor increase in total employment (a fall in certain cases) with a general increase in output and a rapid increase in energy use. The rising output labour ratios show that automation has definitely affected the employment position in general and that of the women in particular.

Thus it becomes more than apparent that while capital labour ratios, output labour ratios, capital output ratios show the definite anti-employment bias of manufacturing activity in general, the diminishing participation of women in economic activity at the national level is far more glaring. If the status of women in a society is, in fact, a valid enough indicator of the "health" of that society and economic participation a pointer to that status, does the 'health' of Indian society today not come into question?

CHAPTER III

THE SCHEDULED CASTES: UNEQUAL ELEMENTS IN INDIA'S EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

On the eve of the adoption of the Constitution in 1950 there were numerous State Acts that attempted in divergent fashions to deal with the problem of untouchability. The Indian Constitution for the first time sought to provide an all-India infra-structure backed with a supporting legal framework for the country's greatest battle against human indignity. The practice of untouchability was abolished under Article 17 of the Constitution and in accordance with the provisions of Article 35. The Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955 further made the practice of untouchability a cognizable offence punishable under the law. In addition to these, certain 'privileges' and special provisions were contained in the Constitution for the upliftment of those sections of the population which for centuries have been oppressed and are thus a socially and economically handicapped. Under Article 15, the state is empowered to make special privileges for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Under Articles 16 and 29, the State can make reservations in public sector and educational institutions for these sections. Article 17 specifically abolishes untouchability and its practice in any form. The state undertakes to promote the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and exploitation (Article 46). The reservation of seats in Parliament and the state legislatures in proportion to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes population is specified in Articles 330 and 332. Under the Constitution, the term Scheduled Castes refers to people belonging to the ex-untouchable castes popularly known as Harijans. They were earlier known as the 'panchams', exterior castes etc. Contact with Harijans was considered defiling as they were required to undertake the disagreeable occupations of tanning, leather work, scavenging etc.

The Constitution and law notwithstanding over the last five years, innumerable stories have got into the press of atrocities committed against Harijans on a massive and inhuman scale. Since March 1977, Bihar has earned the dubious distinction of accounting for the largest number of such cases, the major outrages having occurred in Karganar, Belchi, Pathadda, Chaundadano, Gopalpur, Dharampura. The same scene

in Bihar is a depressing one. Madhya Pradesh made its mark with the recent Narainpur outrage. The Khanjawla incident was a pointer to the assertion from rural Delhi that the capital had to figure prominently in official statistics, however outrageous the subject.

There has been a 50 per cent increase in violent incidents in which scheduled castes were the victims in Uttar Pradesh where 5,000 such incidents were reported in 1977 alone. During the 1973-77 period, a 10 per cent increase in similar incidents involving scheduled tribes took place. In Maharashtra the number of incidents involving Adivasis shot up from 13 in 1973 to 406 in 1977.

Number of incidents in which members of the SC were victims

		<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
1. Assam	...	N11	N11	N11	N11	N11
2. Andhra Pradesh	...	18	22	27	34	70
3. Bihar	...	274	258	263	621	421
4. Gujarat	...	243	352	184	203	298
5. Haryana	...	N11	1	25	11	21
6. Himachal Pradesh	...	N11	N11	N11	15	42
7. Jammu and Kashmir	...	N11	9	21	3	N11
8. Karnataka	...	N11	N11	55	79	59
9. Kerala	...	356	493	331	254	136
10. Madhya Pradesh	...	1179	1578	1587	1829	2133
11. Maharashtra	...	223	277	263	211	367
12. Orissa	...	52	24	25	14	69
13. Punjab	...	N11	N11	167	147	81
14. Rajasthan	...	2	18	100	71	179
15. Tamil Nadu	...	40	35	7	18	2
16. Uttar Pradesh	...	3797	5791	4656	2447	4974
17. West Bengal	...	2	2	70	6	2
18. Delhi	...	N11	N11	N11	5	3
19. Pondicherry	...	..	..	..	..	7
20. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	...	...	..	..	..	8
		6186	8860	7781	5968	8872

Number of incidents in which members of ST were victims

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
1. Assam	N11	N11	N11	N11	N11
2. Andhra Pradesh	N11	3	..	6	9
3. Bihar	9	2	7	14	NA
4. Gujarat	N11	..	..	170	407
5. Haryana	N11	..	..	2	N11
6. Himachal Pradesh	..	..	..	..	1
7. Jammu and Kashmir	..	..	..	..	..
8. Karnataka	..	..	..	..	4
9. Kerala	N11	27	15	30	N11
10. Madhya Pradesh	282	286	486	521	147
11. Maharashtra	13	4	333	292	406
12. Orissa	9	4	..	7	24
13. Punjab	..	..	16	2	N11
14. Rajasthan	1	6	22	15	103
15. Tamil Nadu	..	..	..	..	..
16. Uttar Pradesh	48	65	..	6	6
17. West Bengal	..	..	..	..	..
18. Delhi	..	..	..	..	..
19. Pondicherry	..	..	..	..	..
20. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	NA	NA	NA	NA	21
	<u>362</u>	<u>397</u>	<u>488</u>	<u>1067</u>	<u>1138</u>

"Successive governments in Tamil Nadu have been fond of boastfully contrasting the treatment of scheduled castes in their 'progressive' state with that prevailing across a wide belt in Northern India. The oft-repeated claim has been that cruder forms of social oppression including physical attack against them does not exist on any significant scale in Tamil Nadu. This claim has recently been dealt a swinging blow by a survey conducted by the Union Home Ministry that reveals "a distinctly upward trend" in crimes against people belonging to the scheduled castes over the last four years."

Crimes committed against members of the scheduled castes
by members of the non-scheduled castes in Tamil Nadu *

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
Murder	3	2	2	4
Grievous hurt	..	9	..	8
Rape	..	..	..	6
Arson	..	1	..	4
Other offences	4	6	52	108
Total	<u>7</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>130</u>

* Rising & Crimes against Scheduled Castes, E.P.W. Dec.1, 1978

Untouchables of Tamil Nadu

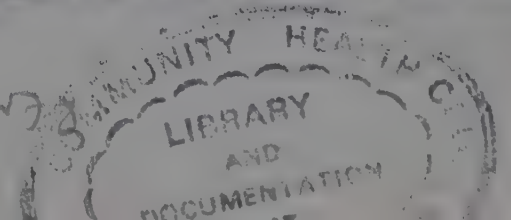
The typical case cited by the report is that of Seekankupam village in Madurantakam Taluk of Chingleput District. Chingleput District in Tamil Nadu is the northern-most district in the State, its landscape made up of coastal plains and hillocks. In the late sixties this district witnessed a significant increase in production that has come as a result of intensive cultivation. The extensive network of tanks and increased tubewell irrigation has made it possible for farmers in the area to quite easily get one more summer crop in the dry months of May and June.

Chingleput district is one of the few districts in the country with a very high percentage of Harijans. On an average, the scheduled castes comprise 25 per cent of the district's population and in some pockets this percentage rises to over 60 per cent. The Harijans thus form the largest single caste group in this area. Inevitably we find that caste and social organisations are inextricably linked. Most of the landowners belong to the higher castes and the vast majority of agricultural labourers are untouchables. The Mudaliars and Reddiars are the dominant land-owning caste groups. Although they constitute only 10 per cent or less of the total population, on an average each one of them owns over 5 acres of land and the majority owns over 10 acres. Holdings that are of over 100 acres in this area almost inevitably belong to members of this caste group.

The Naickers are a caste group less powerful than the previous. Economically 66 per cent of the Harijans do not own even a scrap of land; 24 per cent own tiny plots below one acre. Only in isolated cases would one find instances of Harijan families who own over ten acres. The vast majority of Harijans are engaged in agricultural labour. Though the Naickers also form a significant proportion of this economic class, they are placed above the Harijans in the caste hierarchy.

It is only the Harijans who serve as "Padiyals" or attached labourers to the landlords and are socially "untouchable". A padiyal is required to do all work (agricultural and non-agricultural) that is demanded of him. Often one finds entire families that are attached.

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The payment is always in kind, varying between 3 to 12 marakkals a month (1 marakkal = 4 measures) or Rs.12 - 45 in cash. The coolie labourer works for daily wages ranging from Rs.5 to Rs.4 for men and half these amounts for women. The landlords are themselves the money-lenders lenders who either operate pawn shops or give direct loans. Interest is normally in kind - 6 marakkals of paddy as soon as harvest is over, for Rs.100 borrowed before harvest. This often works out to about 60 per cent per annum.

The worst hit victims of this pattern of social organization are Harijan women. The average family is of eight members upon whom the unpaid woman worker wife/mother waits. Fresh water in the coastal area is a rarity which is the exclusive property of the caste Hindus who would not hesitate to kill the untouchable who dares to 'pollute' their water supply. The only water available to the Harijans in Seckananuppan is from the seepage of stagnant water from two k.m. away. Inevitably untouchability transforms itself tangibly into the segregated Harijan settlement. Harijans who venture to set up homes outside these provoke serious resentment. The subjugation of Harijans is even reflected in the cultural lives of the people. The women in some areas are prohibited from wearing blouses, flowers, jewels or plaiting their hair. The women have to wear their saris 6 inches above their knees. The Harijans are not allowed to carry food in anything but mudpots. They continue to perform their traditional roles of beating the drum for funerals, digging graves for the high-born, etc.

Economic and social power is inextricably linked with political power. The Panchayat Samitis are always headed by big landlords and rich farmers and are hence outside the reach of the Harijans. In many of the villages, the one or two Harijan representatives are required to stand outside the door while the panchayat meets or sit on the floor while others sit on chairs. So much for the voice this section has in decision-making or power to protect the interests of the sections they represent.

But symptoms of a mounting restlessness amongst these people are becoming increasingly familiar. There is a growing unwillingness to passively accept the injustices and indignities to which they have

been subjected to for centuries. There is a dimly forming realization that their only possible strength and salvation rests in their organization and unity.

In Seekanankuppam the landless labourers belonging to the scheduled castes, long subjected to systematic attacks by caste Hindus drew up a list of demands. Five Reddy landlords in this area own almost every inch of land. Out of the 800 acres of cultivable land, two families own over half. Whatever land belongs to the temples has been taken over by these families. The biggest landlord is also the president of the Panchayat.

The young Harijans in this village started by voicing their demands for wages in cash. The process was initiated by a section of local labourers who had been in the city looking for jobs but had returned disappointed. To begin with, they tactfully organized a meeting with local landlords where they put forward their demands. The landlords staged a walk-out. The following day, the elders approached the landlords with the modest request of a mid-day meal which was ruthlessly turned down. Several false cases were instituted against active Harijan labourers. This brought to the surface resentments and anger that had been simmering below. The years of "peace" in the village was shattered, the Harijans rose up spontaneously to resist. To intimidate the Harijans the landlords sought the help of the law - the Sub-Inspector of Police and Tahsildar were invited to intervene in their favour. The local police force was organized against the Harijans and the number of false cases registered rose steadily. The demands of the Harijans included the payment of government-fixed wages for all workers, the enforcement of government-prescribed work hours, no importation of outside labourers except in the event of the genuine shortage of local labour, the treatment of workers under 18 as child labour and payment to them of Government-stipulated wages.

Agreements that were reached were regularly sabotaged by the landlords. When the labourers finally struck work on 2-12-1977 outside labourers were brought in under police protection to harvest the standing crop. This led to a direct confrontation between the striking

labourers and the landlords. The next two days witnessed violent clashes wherein the landlords resorted to full-scale goondaism. Caste-Hindu mercenaries were recruited and attacks were mounted on the Harijan colony. The Harijans armed themselves and countered the attack and in the course of fighting an important member of the landlord's family was beaten up. The following night the Harijan village was encircled, the men beaten up, women raped, labourers kidnapped. The Harijans' only supply of water was polluted. Today, having denied the labourers work, which has amounted to an agricultural lockout, the landlords are bringing large tracts of land under casurina cultivation. A padyatra was of 3000 Harijans was organized to Madras but petitions and representations yielded no results. Arrests of Harijan workers continued and the desperate labourers resorted to a gherao of the police station for two days and nights.

There has been very definitely a growing militancy among the Harijans and this and the Villuppuram clashes can be traced back to the fact that as Prasad Rao reports in the Times of India, "in the last two years ... the mood and temper of the Harijan community has been changing with the younger elements growing more conscious of their rights and privileges under the Constitution.....The Dalit Panther spirithas definitely trickled down south and it would be naive to expect the Harijan community to be cowed down by the age-old methods of pacification.

In the last week of July 1978, 12 persons belonging to the scheduled castes, including a boy of 12 and a women of 35 were butchered in broad daylight.

Villuppuram, a 4-hour drive from Madras on the National Highway is located in the heart of South Arcot in Tamil Nadu. Located in the centre of the town, close to the regulated market and bus stand, lies a slum of 800 mud and thatch huts whose 3000 inhabitants are all S.C. (Nearly 50 per cent of Villupuram's scheduled caste population lives in this Pariah colony.)

In June, a month before the clash, two bus conductors had been beaten up by some Harijan coolies because of an incident of ill-treatment. The bus drivers and conductors went on strike thereby catalysing the grouping of the landlords, merchants and

bus-owners on the one hand against the Harijans. The immediate cause of the July clashes was the molestation of a young woman who lives with a Harijan truck driver from Pariah colony by a "caste Hindu" labourer employed at one of the vegetable stalls. Later, on the evening of July 23, 1978, seven Harijans beat up the caste Hindu labourer in his house. Almost immediately the Vegetable Merchants Association filed a complaint and decided to call a hartal. A procession was organized to implement the hartal. Anti-Harijan slogans and slogans calling for the destruction of the Harijan colony were shouted. The elders in the Harijan community took note that the hartal meant the loss of a day's wages and with anger mounting, the safety of the Harijan colony was in danger. Five of the seven accused were traced and handed over to the police. They were arrested and cases were registered against them immediately. The influential caste Hindus were asked by the D.S.P. to try and negotiate terms of peace. Not only was the suggestion turned down but while the Harijans waited for the caste Hindus to come for talks, an anti-Harijan meeting was called in the caste-Hindu colony. On the way two groups of Harijan rickshaw drivers were assaulted, their vehicles burned. The mob moved on to the colony where explosives were used to set the colony ablaze. A complaint had been made by the rickshaw drivers who had been assaulted earlier. The fire brigade summoned was not allowed to enter until the Harijans themselves went on the offensive.

This organized resistance dispersed the mob that night but the following morning the mob had reassembled and set fire to the colony. Once again fire engines were prevented from entering until the Harijans went on the offensive. "The R.D.O., D.S.P. and Circle Inspector along with a contingent of not less than 100 steel-helmeted policemen looked on". In the Harijan retaliation a sizeable number of caste Hindu shops seem to have got burned and the anti-Harijan mob began to close in on the Harijan colony. Attacks continued through July 25 and residents began to flee. 12 corpses were found on July 26 and 27th, of whom 7 have been identified as Harijans, only 5 of whom were from this colony. Post-mortem reports are proof of the brutality of the murders.

On the early afternoon of the 26th the Harijans had begun to realize that this could not be prolonged indefinitely. The mass exodus to other villages began that day. On Thursday, the 27th, the fourth day of the hartal, the Harijan colony looked devastated and forlorn....." Everyone, save a handful of women, old people and children had left. Those who remained had not eaten for days. The Times of India correspondent (August 1, 1978) reported that he did not find a single policeman or official in the colony to give protection and help.

The question that arises is what it is that lies at the root of these heinous crimes. Are these victims killed or persecuted because they are Harijans? Were these actions mere 'atrocities'? Are newspaper reports and political parties using the Harijan issue to blur the more important contradictions that manifest themselves, by describing the major section of the state's agricultural proletariat as down-trodden Harijans? "At the root of the Villupuram tension lies the growing conflict between the town's dominant economic interest - traders and merchants - and Harijan labourers The most wrenching element of the tragedy lay in the success of the former in mobilising a large number of labourers (caste-wise placed higher than the Harijans) but who in most other respects are as oppressed and exploited as the Harijans whom they attacked.

Villupuram is an important centre of business activity. The heart of the economy is the state-owned regulated market (one of the most active in the state). Most of the coolies who find employment here are either Harijans or Vanniyars (cooled locally as Gounders). The daily earnings of the labourers fluctuate from a maximum of Rs.8 per day to practically nothing during some days of the year. The other important place of work is the bus stand.

Most of the residents of the Pariah colony are casual labourers with no assured or permanent income. The colony's labour force includes rickshaw pullers, coolies, seasonal agricultural labour. A significant number are placed in regular work The rest of the town's population is constituted by widely differentiated categories of Caste Hindus and Muslims. Two major Muslim groups together with the Nadar traders stand out powerfully in the town's economic

activity. The latter also owns the oil mills and timber depots while the former group controls wholesale trade. Retail trade is handled by the Reddiars, Naidus, Mudaliars etc. The Vanniars, classified as caste Hindus though among the backward class, are of crucial importance. A small section of this group owns medium-sized trading establishments etc., but the bulk of them are labourers like the Harijans - coolies in the regulated market, porters at the bus stand, loaders and unloaders, cycle rickshaw pullers. But their superiority above the Harijans lies in the fact that they are not restricted to a segregated colony. This "false consciousness" of superiority prevents the different sections who share the same type of economic conditions and are subject to the same kind of exploitation from developing feelings of solidarity.

The development of Harijan militancy in Villupuram has manifested itself in the area of economic activity (spontaneous struggles for better remuneration and living conditions) and in the social field. The sheer fact of geographical and work concentration have given rise to feelings of solidarity which help create the rudimentary elements of democratic organization. They have been bargaining in an increasingly assertive fashion realizing the strength of collective members. On the social plane they display strong internal unity in face of external threat. They maintain strong links with Harijans of other places and go to their aid when they need it. They are acutely conscious of atrocities committed against Harijans in other parts of the country.

Another dimension that authorities has sought to blur is the role of the police; the gross failure to protect the lives and property of the people in Pariah colony, their inaction. The policemen did not lift a finger to disperse the anti-Harijan mob while murderous plans were quite blatantly being discussed. The setting fire to the Harijan colony was not prevented. The arrival of the armed reserve police could not stop the murder. To cover up failure, there has been an official attempt to distort and misrepresent facts, to insinuate that the Harijans were the main instigators of trouble*.

* The Villupuram Atrocity, E.P.W. October 14, 1978

What then is the implication of all these facts? Harijan consciousness cannot but spread the alignment of all powers - economic, social, political and bureaucratic will not cow them down. And yet Harijans constitute merely 11 per cent of the Indian population. Sections which share their economic situation are being used, pitted against the Harijans by the powerful. The false consciousness is perpetuated and reinforced; the cultural block that prevents their solidarity is strengthened. What then would be the basis of the organisation of the poor in India? Constitutional safeguards in the interests of the S.C. are being used as weapons to safeguard the interests of the powerful. Individual cases of Harijan education or prosperity are held forth as a bait and promise that will remain unfulfilled.

If organisation along caste line poses insurmountable problems, what is the potential or basis for the organisation of the poor along class lines. What is the case for the development of union activities?

CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZED LANDLESS*

-- Kuttanad, Kerala --

Kuttanad was the principal rice growing region in the former princely state of Travancore. Kuttanad taluk is mostly a water logged area which comprises of the low lying villages. Paddy fields in Kuttanad, known as Padasekharams account for 80.27 per cent of the geographical area. The tenancy reforms initiated in Travancore in the 19th century led to the emergence of a class of capitalistic entrepreneurs who reclaimed the backwaters and Kayal cultivation in Kuttanad. These operations gathered momentum in the first two decades of the 20th century when the rapid rise in the price of paddy during the first World War period made the venture commercially attractive.

Kuttanad is mostly a single crop area, where the Punja cultivation is conducted during the months of October to March. Annually, following the onset of the South-west monsoon, the padisekharams are dewatered, and after replenishing the ring bunds around them, cultivation is carried out. Because of the nature of the land, within any given padisekharam, all the main operations have to be carried out at the same time. This results in a massive demand for agricultural labour for a few months, followed by months in succession of complete unemployment.

36 per cent of those people engaged in agriculture are wage earners labourers for whom employment during the punja cultivation is the single most important source of income. For the remaining part of the year they are almost completely unemployed. Mobility of labour is severely constrained due to lack of transportation facilities, the area being water-logged. This leaves the labourers with little to choose from.

Reclamation-cum-farming in the Kuttanad developed against a predominantly feudal background. Both these operations demanded the service of a larger number of labourers. With the expansion of the cultivable land early in the country, there was a massive increase

* Article by Joan Moncher E.P.W. Annual 1978

in the demand for labour, especially during the harvest season. Agricultural labourers from surrounding areas regularly migrate into the Kuttanad area for a period of four to six weeks, living as a floating population and participating in the harvest.. In recent years, coir workers have joined their ranks along with fishermen whose conditions have been rendered precarious with the growth of mechanised fishing. A totally new set of socialist relation of production has arisen, whereby there is a very little attachment of individual labourers to any particular place or land, or even to any particular locality.

There has been a steady decline in real wages in Kuttanad in the past three decades despite steep increase in money wages, due to the high prices of paddy. They are earning less today than they did ten yearsback, though the official wages in Kuttanad are higher than the statutory requirements of the Minimum Wages Act. From the point of view of labourers this is due to the ocean of labour force, available in excess of requirement and pressurising for employment with the result that each man's share is reduced. Today, it is common to find an army of people harvesting a single acre of land belonging to a small peasant with the result that amount of time employed is measured in minutes! Earnings dwindle also, as number of hours of harvest diminish.

It was almost inevitable that in this area union activities would develop. Union activity among the agricultural labourers developed earlier in Kuttanad than elsewhere perhaps because of its proximity to Alleppy, and development of labour unions in the coir industry and tea estates in the surrounding areas.

The extreme development of capitalist farming in Kuttanad and adjacent areas led to strong politically active agricultural unions from the 1930s to the 1960s. Indeed, a plethora of unions led by the Congress, the CPI, and the CPI(M) grew, though clearly the majority of unskilled workers belonged to the CPI (M) union.

In the period following the formation of labour unions there was strong agitation for improving the quality of work (shorter hours etc.) and increasing the rate of wages, both in cash (for seasons other than harvest) and in kind (at harvest time). And

clearly, through the long hard struggle the rates of wages have gone up.

But despite 40 years of agitation, the present is far from good. Through hours of work have improved and the official wages increased, the living conditions of agricultural labourers are still deplorable.

Some untouchable labourers living on an island speak out: "We are only labourers here. Some special labourers of the cultivators would get first preference. Others would get only after that. So many times we had even to come back without getting work. When so many people come, they give coupons to those who stay in the locality. Four persons for 10 cents. Only after the neighbours are given the coupons, the others from outside get it. Altogether I got about 25 days but there were days when I did not get even one para of paddy. In one day, it may be 15 minutes, sometimes 10 minutes, sometimes 20 minutes, but never more than one para for a day. Even last year it was much better. For weeding, we get about one to two months. It is for a full five hours. Only sometimes it may not be. Somehow we manage, sometime we have sumptuous meals. We manage with the balance of last harvest's paddy. Now the floods will come and we have to live on top of the houses. We prepare platforms and use tables and benches and stay on top of the houses."

The landowners who were formerly tenants and gained right to the land through the tenancy reforms have their grievances too.

"The land is a problem. I wanted only 10 women, but to select only 10 from the local area is a problem. So I had to select 20. They work for three hours and go. Now there is not much problem for us, they listen, but a time will come. Political leaders will say, you give them work. What we need in Kuttanad is absolute right to select people to work and to fix their number".

Prices for paddy have fallen since 1975, which the cultivators found difficult to accommodate. This also served to further harness the discontent of the people. It is clear that there is tremendous amount of tension between the tenants and the labourers. From their respective point of view, each is justified.

At present there are cultivators in Kuttanad sitting with paddy from the second harvest in their granaries which they cannot sell because the prices are so low; yet at the same time, there are also labourers going hungry. The situation is tending more towards a crisis with rice cultivation becoming more and more unviable.

The agricultural labour unions seem to feel that there is really no issue, and are only concerned about seeing to it that the customary wage as paid in 1975 was continued. They do not seem to have thought of redistribution of land so that the landowners would be allowed to possess only what they could manage to cultivate (with hired labour only during weeding or harvesting) and the remaining land would be distributed to the landless.

In those villages where the Marxist leaders had been tenants, and had led the agitation for land reform, a new problem has come up, since these former leaders are now landowners. Indeed, now any agitation on the part of the labourers could only be for higher wages, or other benefits which are inconvenient for even smaller landowners to accept.

In fact, by 1975-76 it was striking to hear how the CPI (M) union people defended the landlords and discussed their plight, instead of focussing on the grievance of the landless labourers.

Many labourers are quite critical of the union, saying that they spent all their time fighting each other. A singular lack of direction is evident among the union activities in Kuttanad, even though the labourers are more educated, had been in the vanguard of agricultural labour movements and had won wage increase through long and bitter struggles.

Things can go on pretty much exactly as they are for some time. But eventually something has to happen. "The gross inequality is something the poor do not accept, and ultimately

the antagonism will have to be played out. The only question is when and in what fashion".

CHAPTER V

THE BRITISH AND AFTER

The preceding pages have shown the state in which our people live. Here we attempt to briefly trace the historical changes that have taken place particularly from the arrival of the British.

It was undoubtedly the British Colonial state which first gave to India a modern, politically unified form. Britain had her own exploitative interests in India, but in the process of colonising the country, she laid the basis for the development of capitalism in India. We cannot trace in any detail the process here. But four features must be mentioned:

1. Britain created the modern, legal, administrative apparatus necessary for the development of capitalism.
2. By creating an English educated intelligentsia to man these institutions, she created a stratum of intellectuals who began to develop a national outlook.
3. The peasantry in different areas of the country were successively drawn into the world market. Entire regions were forced to shift from foodgrain production to the production of cash crops like jute, indigo, cotton etc.

In other areas the high rates of revenue extracted by the British in cash forced the entire peasantry to alienate their products. They were also thus drawn into the commodity market. Large sections of the peasantry found it extremely difficult to pay the revenue and were forced to resort to borrowing from local merchants and moneylenders in order to meet the demands of the State. The rates of interests were phenomenal and this peasantry sunk into perpetual indebtedness. One distinct class of capitalists emerged from among the professional money-lending castes. Along with this, an opposite development occurred in the emergence of a section of the bourgeoisie drawn mainly from the dominant peasant castes. The

The dominant peasant castes were those castes who traditionally controlled much of the land in the village even prior to the development of capitalism. Thus, for example, the Jats of U.P., the Vokkaligas of Mysore, the Kammas and Reddys of the Godavari and Telangana areas would be specimens of this type.

For the sake of our political analysis however, two features must be borne distinctly in mind (i) because of the primitive character of this layer of bourgeoisie, they had virtual local social existence. Their dominant forms of consciousness were inherited and taken over from their local culture. Whenever they organised themselves they necessarily did so through caste, religious and linguistic associations, hence their class consciousness and class organisations developed through caste associations. This feature we will meet right through Indian social and political history of the last 100 years. (ii) Again, because of the economic backwardness of this rural bourgeoisie, they had to reduce the wage levels of the rural proletariat to the absolute minimum. Thus they could not tolerate any form of self-organisation of the rural proletariat. The depressed social position of scheduled castes, tribes and other backward castes meant that their general standard of living was low. Hence any attempt to improve their social position through cultural movements were bitterly opposed by this bourgeoisie.

4. It was only in the 20th century that a significant layer of modern industrial capitalists developed in India. Some of the characteristics of this industrial bourgeoisie are:

- 1) Its methods of production were based on the most advanced techniques. At this level it was radically different from the rural bourgeoisie;
- ii) However, though modern in the above sense and having a truly national economic existence, this layer was drawn fundamentally from the Parsis, Marwaris and Gujaratis. None of these communal groups exercised much social hegemony in India. Their importance grew out of their economic productive existence and not out of their traditional social status;

(iii) The bourgeoisie was structurally dependent on state intervention, thus their relation to the national movement was hesitant, because they could not afford to antagonise the British colonial states.

(iv) Hence even this layer of the bourgeoisie could not emerge organically as a 'leading group' and rally the rest of society behind it.

The National Movement and the Congress

Given this pattern of economic development in India the bourgeoisie emerged as an enormously internally differentiated and socially heterogeneous class.

It was only by the time Gandhi emerged on the scene that this section had sufficiently consolidated itself and had found in Gandhi its most effective leader. Gandhism was able to forge a class unity between different layers of the bourgeoisie and also to create a historic bloc with the middle strata of town and country. At the same time, Gandhi was able to keep the movement within the limits of bourgeois order. Whenever the movement threatened to go beyond these limits, whenever the subaltern classes of town and country began to assert themselves and give to the movement their decisive social stamp, Gandhi called off the movement on the plea of non-violence. The form of 'Satyagraha' as a political weapon was eminently suited to this highly personalised, individual leadership.

The National movement therefore lacked a radical, popular character. The working classes of town and countryside did not experience it as a fundamental social transformation. For example, on the caste question, Gandhi took a typical mediatory stance. Improve the social position of 'Harijans' but do not threaten the institution of caste. This obviously suited the rural bourgeoisie. Thus, the revolution in India had a predominantly passive character.

After Independence, the congress continued in its

hegemonic role. However, there was already a shift in the nature of its central leadership. Nehruism as against Gandhism was more urban oriented. In terms of economic policy, the 'bourgeois socialism' of Nehru stressed state intervention, building up of heavy industry as against light industry and, in general, favoured industry against agriculture.

This was not at all against the interests of big industrial bourgeoisie; on the contrary, the model of planning and economic development was very similar to that put forward by the big capitalists block in the Bombay plan of 1954.

By the late 50's and early 60's the general social crisis of capitalism in India had begun to set in. This led on the one hand to the growing struggle of the industrial workers and rural poor. On the other hand, this growing social and political crisis expressed itself in the breaking away of many erstwhile Congress factions to form independent regional parties of the rural bourgeoisie. This political crisis was sharply reflected in the 1967 elections where Congress hegemony in the state assemblies was decisively crushed by the victories of these conditions, that the split of the Congress occurred in 1969.

The working class since the late sixties is becoming a qualitatively new phenomenon in India. If during the national movement it was a mere offspring of the Indian bourgeois revolution; if during the 1950 it was a mere corporate group, effectively hegemonised by the bourgeois order, during the sixties it had begun to emerge as an independent political class.

During the national movement, the working class organisation developed as an offshoot of the national Congress. In the countryside the movement was by and large dominated by the rural bourgeoisie organized through the dominant peasant caste associations.

Post-Independence, the bourgeois state under Nehruism

had a sufficiently hegemonic position to decisively mediate in the struggle between capital and labour. Parliament also enjoyed a prestige and a stable existence. Nehruism set the framework for the debates within Parliament and even the communist disputes fell into this framework. The subaltern classes in the countryside were effectively hegemonised. The leadership of the Harijans etc., were well entrapped in the Congress.

It was only in the 1960 that this enormous framework began to crack. The period 1966-69 saw a rapid growth of the workers movement in town and countryside. New forms of struggle were thrown up by the workers movement. New layers of militants and a new leadership was thrown up during these struggles.

In the countryside the class struggle began to assume a more distinctly proletarian character. No longer were their struggles led by the dominant peasant castes, the rural bourgeois. Rather, they took the form of struggles against this very bourgeoisie. What is evident about the struggles of Naxalbari, Srikakulam and innumerable others is that they are struggles of wage labour against capital in its multitude of concrete, historical forms.

Realising this, the bourgeois leadership is preparing itself. Ideologically they have begun massive attacks on the industrial workers. The rural bourgeoisie is taking a more decisive and repressive attitude to the workers movement.

Thousands of cadre (both communists and other militants) are beginning to experience this new phase of repression. They are struggling heroically against it.

APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Statistics and descriptions of concrete life situations set off in the preceding chapters against a historical analysis of political process in the country provide us with a definite context and framework for the understanding and analysis of efforts made by individuals, groups and organisations to confront the 'challenge of Indian poverty'. It is more than apparent that the 'development' that has taken place in the country has by no means solved the problems that we are confronted with. Industrialisation, commercialisation of agriculture, development of irrigation facilities, transport networks, increase in the availability of finance, credit etc., have in fact been accompanied by a simultaneous process of the impoverishment of the majority — increased caste tensions, alienation of tribal lands, consolidation of the power of the few at the cost of the majority. The magnitude of the problems on the one hand and apparent lack of success in solving them on the other has led individuals, groups and organisations to 'intervene'.

As mentioned earlier in the preface, the case studies have been written on the basis of reports by members of the follow-up group after their visits to the areas. Material was also provided for these case studies by the organizations themselves. No impact studies have been done by the follow-up group. The visits were short in duration and some of the projects visited were in their very initial stages at the time of the visit. As a result of all these factors, it seems necessary to re-assert that the case studies have grave limitations and cannot be taken as conclusive reports about the workings of the groups. The comments are by no means pronouncements, judgments or evaluations. They are merely tentative observations made by members of the follow-up groups during their discussions amongst themselves or with the workers. They are based on the group members' own experiences in their areas and are offered here by way of an attempt at initiating processes of dialogue, reflection and further discussion. The apprehensions

putforward do not in the least negate the positive dimensions of the projects. Wherever possible, these aspects have been stated and in many cases, follow-up group members have revisited projects to learn. The emphasis here is on aspects of the programmes that we have doubts about — not by way of criticism but because it is in these spheres that one of us faces problems that must be deliberated and resolved if processes of development are to move forward and become constructive. Numerous attempts have been made to categorize approaches to development work. A R Desai presents us with a three-pronged picture of the humanitarian, or the philanthropic, the reformist and revolutionary. Glyn Roberts in "Questioning Development" makes a broader distinction between the "liberal view" and the "socialist view". Whatever be the outcome of these analyses, the commonality that they share is manifest in the fact that distinctions are drawn on the observation that approaches to development, in fact development itself, can only be conceived within an ideological framework. No one thinks and operates quite independently. When people enter into the field of development work, at some point they come up with the question "Why are people poor?" How can the suffering be ameliorated. The answers that emerge and the consequent actions taken are the product of this ideological framework. Their approaches thus differ according to their understanding of the causes of underdevelopment, their world view as to what should be. Each one of the approaches functions on the basis of certain assumptions and certain projections on the basis of which action programmes are formulated.

In this section the attempt has been made to classify the projects visited. First, we have tried to analyse the assumptions and world view that we feel is the underlying basis of the programme. Then detailed case studies of particular programmes and activities have been given. At the end of this, we have made comments and observations that emerged out of discussions with the Groups and among members of the follow-up group.

This classification is by no means an exhaustive one nor are all the programmes put under the same category necessarily based on the same model. Where it has been possible, we have tried to incorporate into the case studies the philosophy of the group as it has been made known to us. Further, it would not be right to say that particular programmes are rigidly confined to the limits of the approaches under which they have been classified. As groups or organizations gain experience, their analysis of the causes of underdevelopment, their entire world view in fact may get modified or changed. Thus the same group may have different activities that are categorised differently.

Tentatively we have tried to analyse the different approaches to development by distinguishing between:

Relief and Welfare
Growth
Cooperatives
Education
Organization.

One important note here. The tentative analysis that is given in this section does not enter into the realm of questioning the motives of the people who run the programmes. The attempt has been to see what is being done, what can be done and what should not be done. It is also to be mentioned that even this analysis would not have been possible without the actual experiences of the people who are willing to share it and learn from it. The purpose of this chapter is not to pass judgment on any one approach, but to draw from experiences, so that we can make our interventions more and more meaningful.

*GO IN SEARCH OF YOUR PEOPLE
LOVE THEM,
LEARN FROM THEM,
PLAN WITH THEM,
SERVE THEM,
BEGIN WITH WHAT THEY KNOW,
BUILD ON WHAT THEY HAVE."*

CHAPTER X

The helplessness of people, whether due to poverty, natural calamities or abnormal circumstances invariably evokes sympathy. Interventions in these situations are motivated essentially by the desire to help people in whatever way one can, for it would be inhuman not to. This approach is called the philanthropic approach by A R Desai. The philanthropic group, he says: "does not view the problem of the material and cultural poverty of people in the context of the institutions and basic structure of society."

It holds the conviction that it is possible to ameliorate the position of the poor through direct humanitarian effort without changing these institutions and structures. The causes that have led to the situation are never questioned and in a way, misery is taken for granted as something that is bound to be there and that each one of us must do our little bit in mitigating.

The end of the Second World War brought with it the emergence of relief and rehabilitation activities in a big way. The programmes evolved range from the distribution of food packages and blankets as a means of providing immediate relief measures, to economic, educational and other institutional endeavours for the upliftment of the masses. These programmes embody the creation of charity funds to help the village needy, moral appeals to landlords to relax their pressure on peasants, establishment of schools, hospitals etc. The basic feature of the standpoint and programmatic approach of this group to the problem lies in the fact that its attempts to improve the conditions of the poor within the matrix of the existing institutions and structures by means of purely humanitarian endeavour.

The case studies cited under this category are of:

- (i) relief operations in Andhra
- (ii) foster homes for orphans
- (iii) a shoo-shino boys' centre.

Relief operations after the 1977 cyclone in Andhra:

On the evening of November 19, 1977, a cyclone of unusual magnitude and intensity generated a storm surge ranging from 9 to 20 ft high, 50 miles broad and 15 miles deep. It struck coastal Andhra Pradesh. About 8,000 people were killed in minutes. Many perished during the night and several thousand were left homeless and destitute. The census taken by the government shortly after the cyclone supports a lower estimate but an unknown number of migrant labour (of whom there is no record) were in the area when the cyclone struck. A striking feature has been the extreme variations in the estimates of the dead, the figures ranging from 50,000 to 100,000. Krishna and Guntur districts bore the brunt of this natural disaster, although adjoining districts — Prakasam, East Godavari and West Godavari were seriously affected. As far north as 150 miles away from the centre, effects were felt because of the flooding of the Sharada river due to heavy rains. In Divi taluk the surge was accompanied by winds estimated at between 95 and 125 miles per hour. The waves swept away at least 25 villages and engulfed 50 others within a 350 square mile area. The quantity of water that flowed within 90 minutes is estimated at 27 million c.c.m.

It is not only the number of deaths and the unprecedented devastation caused that stamps this cyclone as extraordinary. The impact it had on the outside world, which found expression in relief operations of every hue and colour, are equally significant. The main burden of this fell on the state government. The Central Government joined the efforts by despatching air force helicopters, the army's technical and support units, and the Home Ministry's civil emergency force.

The concern of the voluntary groups was manifest in nation-wide public rallies, fund-raising efforts, and the mobilisation of volunteer groups from many Indian states. Very quickly there appeared within the stricken area a bewildering variety of organisations assisting in corpse disposal, food

distribution, housing and other activities. These groups differed from one another substantially in terms of their past experience in voluntary work, the extent of their involvement, expertise, manpower, level of commitment, and of course, the resources at their command. Even more evident were their differences in purposes and assumptions.

Food and clothing were collected for the victims of this disaster; funds were raised but when the time for distribution came, each group felt the need to reach the neediest, to prevent pilferage, to avoid long-winded bureaucratic procedures and cut through red-tape that lay at the root of delay and misuse.

What happened in practice was that dozens of citizens' groups (not only from Andhra but from as far away as Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta) accompanied their relief materials to the scene of disaster in order to distribute them on the spot to those who need it the most.

Later, as the magnitude of the disaster became known, many villages and hamlets were 'adopted' by individual groups (and sometimes two groups claimed the same territory — to the resigned delight of the expectant villagers who quickly caught on to their own scarcity value.

There was considerable duplication and gaps in the coverage of villages because the Ad-hoc groups were prone to dump the relief materials in the more accessible villages. Not only was the pattern of choice of villages adhoc, but the kind 'aid' given was also in many cases far from appropriate.

When a disaster strikes, emotions are aroused all over the world. In such a state, people will contribute whatever they can spare and the question of whether what that person spares is useful or not is hardly considered. There is no time; the aid should be immediate; to desire to help is strong and spontaneous. In this context, a lot of duplication and waste is unavoidable. What is unfortunate is that the very aid that has been given might do permanent harm because of the lack of planning and foresight or a very limited perception of the problem. Even relief help is inextricably linked to the basic conceptions

never be limited to strictly measurable quantities. What seems beneficial at a superficial level or charitable and generous, could in fact have a detrimental effect.

The experience in Divi taluk itself tells us a story of how a seemingly rational project of distribution of chickens was nullified in its impact. Chickens were distributed to the victims of the cyclone so that they would have a source of income as well as a source of nutritive food for consumption. What happened in fact was that almost as soon as these chickens were distributed, they were sold to people who collected them at once and took them out of the area.

Another example of this lack of clarity and perspective is found in a similar scheme initiated in the area of the distribution of goats. These goats were not sold but the donors had initiated and implemented this programme keeping only the plight of the victims in mind. They had not taken into consideration the havoc that the goats and their offspring would create in terms of the area's ecology. Fortunately, the extent of this aid programme has been small and if efforts are made, it might still be possible to withdraw these goats and save Divi's ecology but who will do the withdrawing?

Another example of this is found in a rehabilitation programme that was formulated for women. Donors felt that it was important to provide women with work. A community of fisherfolk was selected and forthcoming aid was provided for introducing women to crafts that were non-traditional in the area but which would provide them with income. What the aid giver may not have taken into consideration was the fact that in communities of fisherfolk, men catch the fish and women sell it. The two jobs are complementary and essential. Who would do the selling if the fisherwomen decided to knit and sew rather than to sell fish?

In addition to all these problems that arise out of a one-sided perspective, there is the additional factor of the influence these aid programmes have on the attitudes and

behaviour of the victims. Charity has induced beggary. The survivors today have got accustomed to waiting for groups to arrive and unload their bounty. How does the concept of human dignity fit into this jigsaw puzzle?

Foster homes for orphans:

Foster homes run by the Church with the help of foreign funds are an example of welfarism carried out in an organized manner.

This programme originally started as a human response to the hunger, deprivation and suffering of the children in the Third World. In India alone over 20,000 children are aided through over 400 hostels and homes. The magnitude of the problem on the one hand, and the very limited availability of resources on the other, forces the organizers to select a few individuals for special benefits.

'Orphans' in the west are looked upon as being a special category of handicapped children, who constitute a severe social problem. The term itself has the implicit connotation of deprivation at the physical, psychological and social levels. What is not taken into account, however, is that the magnitude and implication of that same phenomenon are not as severe in the Indian context. In the typical Indian situation particularly in the rural area where extended families are the norm, the responsibility for the individual is shared by their relatives, neighbours and the community at large. The child without a parent becomes a part of a wider social group which assumes responsibility for providing at least the basic minimum. So the problem of orphans are seen by the donors from their own context which has no relation to the Indian reality and their sentiments are exploited to get funds.

This fact makes the foster homes programme a typical example of welfarism, subjective in its perception and isolated in the context in which it is carried out.

Thus, faced with the very low number of orphans in the

rural areas to whom sponsorships can be granted, the authorities have willy-nilly succumbed to the pressures of reality. The real situation in almost all the hostels visited, is that the order of priorities according to which children are selected is reversed. It was found that in all the hostels visited, the number of orphans was very low (in one of the hostels out of 72 children, only 2 were orphans and 10 to 12 semi-orphans). Therefore the funds are today being utilized to support a more easily identifiable group — the Christian community.

The children are primarily selected on the basis of their performance in a competitive examination. It is also worth noting that even among the Christians, it is not the children of the poorest families who enter these hostels. 'It seems that most of the parents of the aided children are salaried employees — middle class or lower middle class, who are poor only relatively'. (The South India Church Man, the magazine of the Church of South India, April 1976).

The pressure for 'doing well' is very great on the children and unrealistic demands are made on them by the staff of the hostels, teachers in the school, their own natural and foster parents. This consequently fills the child with feelings of guilt and a sense of incompetence. Somewhere inside they feel humiliated and have a very low self-image.

The failure ratio in the final year is more than three-fourths of the students. The failure in the final examination at one stroke cuts the students off from the world they have aspired to and the values which they have internalized. At the end of this they find it almost impossible to come back to manual work. Many of the staff members mentioned that the majority of the students pursue their education and continue in school only because in addition to school being free, free food is also provided. Since the majority of the aided children are from the lower middle class and have fairly large families in most of the cases, one child is isolated for

fostership and the parents feel obliged to bestow upon him/her special attention, better food and clothing. Often, this is done at the cost of depriving the other members of the family of very basic necessities.

Case studies of individual children substantiate that the families of poor peasants or landless labourers are further impoverished during and after their children's stay in the hostels. These children having become a liability (in India children are an economic asset to the family), force a situation when the parents have either to sell their land or get into debt in order to provide for the extra needs of their alienated children.

Shoe-shine Boys' Centre:

Another example is the programme carried out by a group in Durgapur, though on a modest scale when compared to the foster homes.

Durgapur is an industrial city faced with the problem of migration from the rural areas. A salient feature of Durgapur city is the existence of several very large public sector enterprises. Out of the total population of six lakhs, nearly one lakh consists of labourers who have migrated to the newly developed city from different parts of West Bengal and Bihar. The high rate of unemployment makes the lot of the immigrants worse.

A group that works both in urban and rural areas of and around Durgapur has started 'The Shoeshine Boys Centre', most of whom had come to Durgapur in search of jobs as industrial labourers. Their original homes had been destroyed during the emergency and they had been forced to come and settle in an area where there were no basic facilities. The group has helped these immigrants to construct their huts. Initially the centre was faced with problems of finding alternative means of occupation for the people and controlling problems such as bootlegging, prostitution etc.

The shoeshine boys' centre consists of ten boys who had come to Durgapur leaving their families behind in the villages in search of jobs. They were found wandering in the railway station, and were initiated into shoe-shining by the group. Polish boxes were at first given free of cost. Today they are being supplied to them against bank loans. These loans are repaid by them in monthly instalments. The boys go to the railway station in the morning to find work and come back at night. Literacy classes are conducted for them after they return. They live together in the residence constructed for them by the group. When they are ill, the centre provides medical care. This has been functioning for the past four or five years.

The type of work mentioned above had only increased the dependency of the shoeshine boys on the group. There is very little scope for expansion since it is a special programme for a special group. No meaningful explanation could be given to the work in terms of the socio-economic background to the area. It does not even peripherally touch the problem of migration, urbanization and unemployment, and so it can only remain a welfare programme.

Some questions that arise

Each of these case studies seems to indicate that this approach to development places great emphasis on the individual rather than the social group of which the individual is a part. Individual beneficiaries are selected and that individual's success or failure is viewed in isolation rather than in the context of its relation to that of the group.

The pressure is to do well, to succeed. This is encouraged only by the examination system and other elements of competitiveness. These values are further promoted in numerous instances by the Christian ethic of personal sin and salvation.

It is also quite apparent that because of the primarily emotional nature of the response, wherein the victims are the

"beneficiaries" or "recipients" of favour, the relationship between the giver and the receiver becomes an unequal one and therefore paternalistic and patronizing. What is good, what is required is wholly determined — what needs to be done, what do we value and preserve in the community? Who decides? In the case of relief and welfare the deciding factor is predetermined.

To sum up, it would not be out of context to quote William Ryan* according to whom two approaches to social problems have existed side by side, one being the exceptionalist viewpoint reflected in arrangements that are private, voluntary, remedial, special, local and exclusive. Such arrangements imply that problems occur to superficially defined categories of persons in an unpredictable manner. The problems are unpredictable, even unique, exceptional to the rule, occurring as a result of individual defect, accident or unfortunate circumstance and must be remedied by means that are particular and, as if it were tailored to the individual case.

Social problems are a function of the social arrangements of the community or the society and since these social arrangements are quite imperfect and inequitable, such problems are both predictable, and more important, preventable through public action. They are not unique to the individual and the fact that they encompass individual persons does not imply these persons are in themselves abnormal. If one is inclined to explain all instances of deviance, all social problems, all occasions on which help is provided to others as the result of unusual circumstances, defect, or accident, one is unlikely to inquire about social inequalities.

This is not to devalue exceptionalistic services. The problems of retardation, handicapped children, unskilled adult labourers, will continue to exist, however perfect be services of prenatal care, education etc. But these should be the exception

*Ryan, William: Blaming the Victim, C.C.P.D. Newsletter 1977

rather than the rule requiring services that are predominantly exceptionalist and specialised in character. The danger in the exceptionalistic viewpoint is in its impact on social policy when it becomes the dominant component in social analysis. 'Blaming the Victim' occurs exclusively within an exceptionalistic framework and it consists of applying exceptionalistic explanations to universalistic problems.

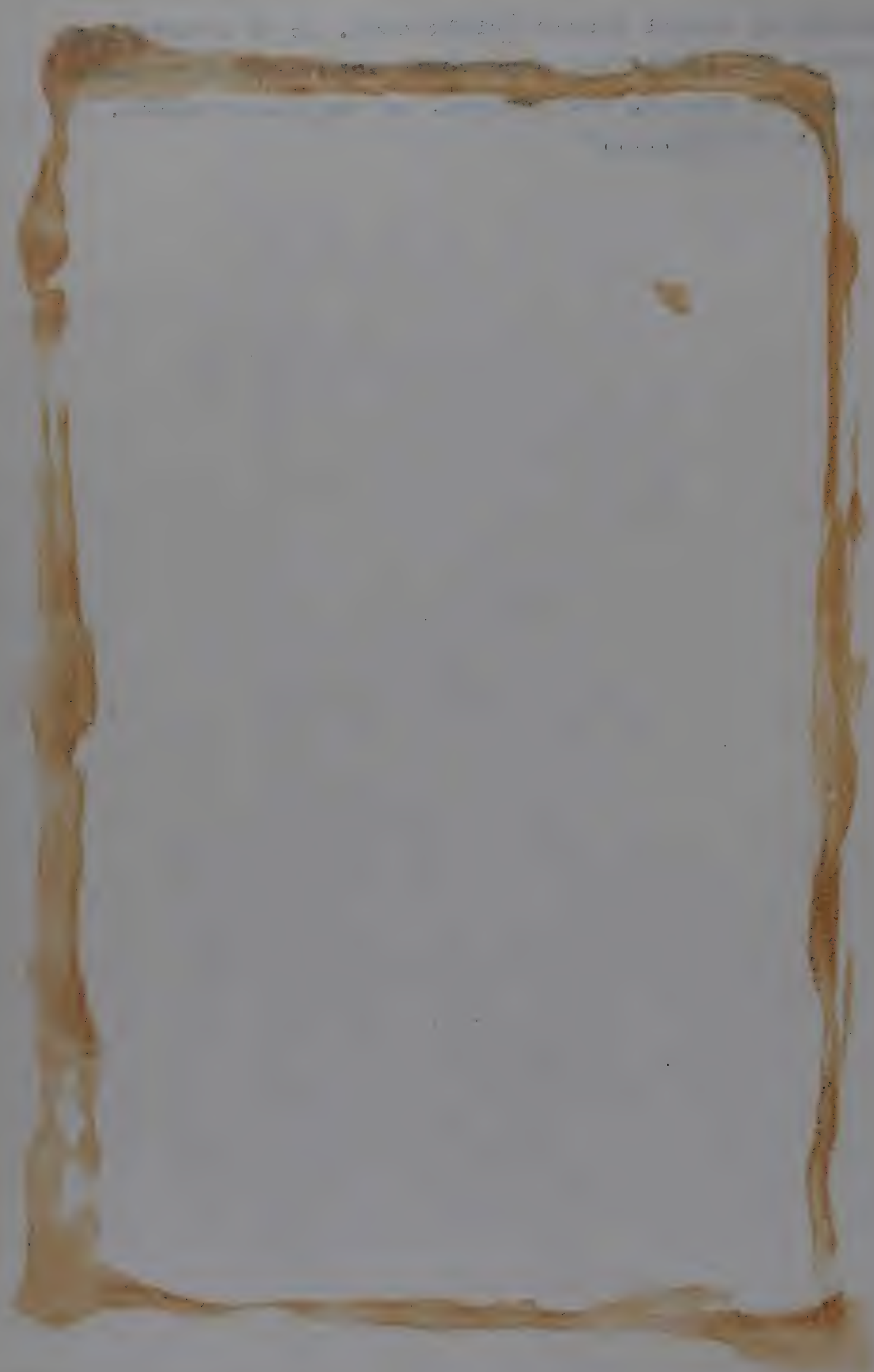
"Victim blaming" is cloaked in kindness and concern, and bears all the trappings and statistical furbelows of scientisms; it is obscured by a perfumed haze of humanitarianism. In observing the process of 'Blaming the Victim', one tends to be confused and disoriented because those who practise this, display a deep concern for the victims that is quite genuine ***

Blaming the victim is, of course, quite different from old-fashioned conservative ideologies. The latter simply dismissed victims as inferior, genetically defective, or morally unfit; the emphasis is on the intrinsic, even hereditary defect. The former shifts its emphasis to the environmental causation. The old-fashioned conservative could hold firmly to the belief that the oppressed and the victimized were born that way — "that way" being defective or inadequate in character or ability.

The new ideology attributes defect and inadequacy to the malignant nature of poverty, injustice, slum life, and racial difficulties. The stigma that marks the victim and accounts for his victimisation is an acquired stigma, a stigma of social, rather than genetic, origin. But the stigma, the defect, the fatal difference — though derived in the past from environmental forces — is still located within the victim, inside his skin or as a result of things outside their reach.

With such an elegant formulation, the humanitarian can have it both ways. He can, all at the same time, concentrate his charitable interest on the defects of the victim, condemn the vague social and environmental stresses that produced the defect (some time ago) and ignore the continuing effect on

victimizing social forces (right now). It is a brilliant ideology for justifying a perverse form of social action designed to change, not society, as one might expect, but rather society's victim....."



CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH APPROACH

In about the early 1950's a perceptible change took place in the basic emphasis of developmental activities. The realization dawned on finding groups and organizations that developmental activities that operated with exceptionalistic strategies were, in fact, failing. The aid given was hardly useful in solving the problem of poverty on a long-term basis. It prepared people only to receive more and more, rather than to develop the resources they had at their command and build their own systems of production. The emphasis of developmental activity shifted to giving aid on the condition that people helped themselves. From just providing those goods and services that people lacked, the developmental mechanism now tried to help people identify their needs and work to solve their problems.

This approach to development, according to A R Desai, subscribed to the view that it is the malfunctioning of the existing social system and its institutions which is the socio-genetic cause of the economic misery and social and cultural backwardness of the people and not the social system and institutions in their basic essence. It is necessary therefore to work for the healthy functioning of these or at most for reforming them. The assumption is that once this is accomplished, it will result in the all-sided betterment of life. The distinguishing characteristics of this standpoint and the pragmatic approach of this group lie in the fact that for elevating the conditions of the poor, it does not regard it necessary to replace the existing social system and its institutions by new ones but strive only to reform them. The strategies employed are correspondingly different. Whereas the philanthropists are service-oriented and in response to their essentially emotional motivation concentrate exclusively on isolated aspects, this group uses the technocratic model, provides technological inputs in the form of agricultural services, technical training and the introduction of modern

technical expertise. Underdevelopment is seen as being caused by the lack of two things vital to their development:

- (i) capital, financial reserves
- (ii) technical knowhow.

In other words, the under-utilization of resources and lack of technical expertise can be set right by the growth-oriented approach which focusses on maximizing production, increasing employment opportunities etc.

The development strategy would include improvement of communications with the advanced world, (building of roads, rail, harbours, airports, hovercraft bases), mechanization and modernisation of production of such materials as the country is best able to produce (hardwoods, tea, coffee, copper ore) and export. This approach places great emphasis of education and technical training for the growth of new attitudes. Again the emphasis is on the individual rather than the group. The pressure is to do well, to succeed. A well-known example of this approach, implemented on a massive scale, is found in the Indian Community Development programme. Substantially supported by Ford Foundation and Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund, these programmes essentially concerned with local communities and their focus was on people's participation. They took for granted that the community had many and varied interests in common thereby setting the precedent for the adoption of the "harmonious model" of development.

The programmes initiated include a wide range of activities like flooding in material inputs and technical expertise, giving training for the development of technical skills, starting cooperatives, etc.

The case studies selected for the purposes of this document include:

- (i) Each household must become a factory
- (ii) Doubling the per capita income
- (iii) Motivation and Technical Assistance.

Each household - a factory:

A project in Y Block of Andhra Pradesh seems to incorporate in totality every dimension of this approach and to go a step beyond.

Origin.--The Trust, registered in 1976, has been the outcome of ten years of continuous work in the area by one individual.

His first struggle was an attempt to start a school in the area. Funds were collected locally. The residents of the area and surroundings contributed Rs.57,000 and the American Peace Corps donated a sum of Rs.19,000. A school was established and one class was added every year. Initially the teaching was on a voluntary basis. The school lays a great deal of emphasis on giving the students both theoretical and practical training in agriculture - an education that is suited to the rural situation. It has received a permanent grant-in-aid and the institution has been handed over to the Zilla Parishad. Another preliminary activity that was conducted was a survey to gather data about the socio-economic situation; the occupational pursuits, the total number of wells, the number of pumpsets etc. This data has also proved very useful.

In 1973 an attempt was made to establish a cooperative sugar factory. It was planned that the factory would process 1,250 tonnes of drought resistant sugarcane. This variety has been specially developed for the area as sugarcane constitutes a major crop here. The plan was also to provide the members with numerous social service facilities. The proposal created alarm in the nearby factories which began to admit new members and increased the facilities they provided as they had never done before. Because of the economic strangle-hold that these factories have in the area and the political power they can wield, it became necessary to abandon the idea of starting a new cooperative venture for the poor and marginal farmers.

In 1974 a Cooperative Farmers Service Centre was floated

to secure bank loans for nearly 200 farmers for buying milch animals. Another dimension was added to its origin in 1976 when a trust was registered to fulfil the need for an apex coordinating body. In fact, the Trust originated in response to four stimuli: First, there was the need to draw together one responsible centre the rapidly increasing number of activities being conducted. It is hoped that the trust will serve to coordinate and be in a position to take a comprehensive view of the entire situation. Second, there was the urge to involve intellectuals interested in development. It was felt that their expertise would be an asset in the planning and introduction of undertakings new to the area. Third, a reliable institution was needed to which funds so far handled at a personal level, could be entrusted to formal body. There was also the desire to emulate other trusts engaged in similar work.

Philosophy and Strategy.--The group working here feels that the crisis in the country is a crisis in leadership. Dynamic leadership is essential to awaken the consciousness and aspirations of the dejected masses, to stimulate the villagers and help them conquer their poverty so that they can look upon themselves as human beings. They want to create a 'multiple leadership', a leadership that will not come exclusively from the rich but a broad-based one that must come from the grass-root level. This leadership must be capable of delivering itself and its followers from poverty and dependence. The group would like to make it possible to provide every opportunity to the villagers in order to bring forth their untapped potential.

The trust workers, both individually and as a group feel very strongly that in addition to the building up of a reliable and strong leadership, self-employment potential must be generated. Each household must be turned into a factory, and employment opportunities must be multiplied.

Organizational structure and operational pattern.--The first thing that needs to be kept in mind is the fact that the organization of the trust activities is project-based and not

determined by the area. This is also true for the manner in which funds and personnel are allocated in the field.

The overall body incharge is the board of Trust. The first office-bearers of the Trust are assisted in their policy-making decisions by two advisory members and four ordinary members. The members of the Trust are all eminent people from government and non-government organisations. They are intellectuals and technical experts who see the need to be involved in rural development and feel the desire to contribute in the process either directly or indirectly.

Thus plans and activities are to be undertaken by the Trust, are discussed in board meetings and suggestions are made. The members of this board are all working outside the project area and their experience in the wider field provides valuable insights for the workers of the Trust. The second level of organisation is constituted locally and consists of representatives from the bureaucracy, intellectuals (teachers, advocates etc.,) progressive themselves. This body has 35 members. The staff of the Trust also contribute to the planning that takes place at this level. The project Administrator is the primary coordinator of the activities.

The Trust emphasises that no plan is predetermined by the workers for the community. Issues related to the plan that is being contemplated are thrown up for discussion and a concrete action framework is drawn up, only strategy for implementation that is to be undertaken by the Trust is determined later by the workers who assert that even in this, changes are introduced by the people.

The workers also said that many of the plans for projects to be initiated has come from the villagers themselves.

The group of the Trust workers consists of social workers (5 men and 3 women) and two geophysicists. This is a group that has recently joined and is still feeling its way about in the area.

The work team meets once a week to process project proposals, report on work that is being done and carry forward group planning and analysis. What is more interesting in their operational pattern is that the main channel of communication that have come to be used are not structured but very informal. Group living makes it possible for workers to share each other's experience and learn in the process. This and the constant interaction that becomes necessary as a result of doing work that is complementary and linked, is contributing to making the specialists multi-purpose workers. The staff needs to have comprehensive view and ready knowledge of every field, in order that they be able to answer the villager's queries.

Activities.-- Although the initial activities of this project were confined to the school for a considerably long period, after the formation of the trust, overall development work has assumed priority.

Flood relief and rehabilitation.---Even before the activities had been formally inaugurated, the coast of Andhra Pradesh was ravaged by the cyclone of November 1977. Y Block also had suffered severe damage due to very heavy rainfall (45") causing two rivers to flood. Over 4,500 families had been rendered homeless and first good crop in the last five years had been destroyed completely. When people requested the Trust for help, it had to reorient its development plans completely and the areas of work were delineated as (a) relief and rehabilitation (b) strictly developmental.

The first area involved construction of houses, obtaining loans from the bank for improved seeds and fertilizer, rehabilitation of families by providing employment etc.

Houses are under construction and it is proposed to relocate villages entirely so that they are not so vulnerable to natural calamity. The houses have been specially designed by the National Building Organisation.

For bringing the land back into production, 500 farmers who otherwise were not eligible for bank loans, were provided

loans to improve the land and buy various resources necessary for cultivation. A plan for rehabilitating 1,500 families, on 150 acres of salt tract was being envisaged. It is expected to form a society of these salt-makers and the Trust will help them with manufacturing and marketing.

Tree plantation and intercropping of pulses on hill slope and banjar land has been proposed for the rehabilitation of 1,000 families, where each family will plant 1,000 trees on an acre of land. The Trust has been sorting out details of this programme with the Central and State Forest Departments.

During the flood, carpenters, potters and wooden toy makers and other village artisans lost their tools and often their raw materials. A programme has been planned whereby the artisans will be formed into a group and arrangements made for replacement of tools, supply of raw materials and in some instances cash assistance.

All the members of the group feel that relief work has helped in establishing rapport with the villages.

Assistance to Village Artisans.--Local traditional crafts are slowly diminishing in popularity and the artisans find it very difficult to continue the family profession. The traditional lacquer work industry in one of the villages has been dying out over the years, partly because of a decline in the quality of the product caused by the inability of the artisans to buy properly seasoned wood, partly for want of designs that meet the demand of the modern market and finally for want of marketing expertise.

The plan is to take over the operation of the lacquer workers cooperative, provide finance, arrange raw material and tools and help with the marketing of the products. The potters in the area are also being helped. They also suffer from similar drawbacks such as inferior quality of clay and technically poor kilns etc. For improving the quality of clay, it has been recommended that the clay from the bed of the Sharda river be used. It is also proposed to experiment with a

a new design for kiln that will reduce the rate of the reject products caused by the problem of high humidity. A technically improved wheel has also been designed by an expert. One of the most important features of the Trust is a Farmers Service Centre, a cooperative venture with the objective of taking up schemes for the integrated development of the area.

Education.—The emphasis of the programme has in the recent years shifted to non-formal education and training courses. The school has been handed over to Zilla Parishad. Now the Trust is planning a non-formal education programme for teaching young people in particular and villagers in general, principles of sanitation, nutrition, farm and home management etc.

Under training programme, it is proposed to send farmers in small groups to visit the major dairy projects in Gujarat and near Poona and also to visit the National Dairy Research Institute at Karnal. This is a continuation of a programme initiated in 1976 when nearly 15 young farmers were sent to Anand in Gujarat and Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation in Urlikanchan, Maharashtra. In these projects the trainees came into contact with farmers who are able to derive 65% of their net income from the sale of milk.

Questions before us

1. Speaking of the origin of the Trust, it was pointed out that one of the objectives in forming the Trust was to "emulate the models of other trusts like the Nizam's Trust engaged in similar work". If this is one of the explicit goals, it must be said that the emulation of the model has been successfully done. The question that requires clarification is whether it is this model that will bring about change, not just at the micro level but also at the macro level. When 40% of 600 odd million people in India live below the poverty line, is it really possible to raise their standard of living by using only economic inputs? Is it enough to view poverty

as a purely economic problem? Should not the political implication be examined and cognisance taken of the wealth that already exists, but is unjustly distributed. The models that are being looked up to (like Anand Dairy Khera - Gujarat etc.) are first of all viable on a larger scale. Their success is mainly the result of an immensely high inflow of technical and material inputs. It may be possible for the trust to use its contacts with foreign funding agencies and harness the resources necessary to duplicate these models.

2. It may be dangerous to measure success and failure in terms of number of projects provided and response to these. How many people have benefitted from the projects in material terms alone is not important. The quality of participation and the change in the consciousness of both the individual and the group is what matters.

3. The knowledge that 80% of the farmers in the area are marginal farmers, is not supported by ready information about what per cent of total land this 80% owns, what their social and economic obligations are and how independent they are in terms of having adequate capital. Where the resources are limited and the need greater, it is impossible to distribute 'benefits' without creating competition and a feeling of injustice among the oppressed. When the means of production such as land, are not available to everybody, then any input meant to increase economic status will ultimately be utilised by only those who already have some advantage. A well, pumpsets, seeds, fertilizers etc., cannot be given to someone who does not have land.

4. In the discussion held during the project visit the project administrator was of the opinion that it is necessary to gear production to fulfil the needs of the people. This initiated a discussion about how the villagers in India today produce only to feed markets in town. He mentioned that in a market economy, the rural production must adapt and take the benefits out of urban markets, which would bring an inflow of money to the rural areas. What is important here to see is that

the problem does not relate to the fact of shifting production from urban to rural areas but being one where the 'elite' uses cheap labour as a means of reducing the cost of production. It was pointed out that those families who produce milk never seem to consume it themselves because of the extremely competitive market economy. This cannot be circumvented by supplying the villagers with goats whose milk has no market value and thereby forcing the villagers to consume it. It is essential to look into the root cause of these standards instead of seeking meek alternatives like providing health, education, employment, irrigation facilities.

5. The organization is consciously trying to forge a close and effective relationship with the government. But government programmes are on the one hand target-oriented and so opposed to the people on the other brought in an inhuman bureaucracy.

6. Another thing that has to be kept in mind is that economic projects both government and non-government are formulated only for specific groups. Thus by their very nature they tend to divide the target population. They raise the economic status of a small group of the oppressed to the exclusion of the majority.

7. In spite of the fact that leadership training is meant to be the focus of all activities, no concrete plans have been formulated to this end. The only leaders who are now emerging and who are playing an active role in the programme are a group of 'progressive' and 'responsive' farmers who have become economically well off. It is significant that the community accommodates these leaders and remains silent in their presence. Their silence may give scope for opportunism among the progressive and well off farmers. All this must be taken into account. Real change can only come when there is change in the power base.

8. Established institutions are identified with welfare

programmes and to say that the people's felt needs are expressed when they ask for a particular programme may be incorrect. The people may be asking for what they think can be and will be provided. Providing additional income to the poor, while the rich continues to get richer is no answer. To take the case of a rich farmer in the project area, who has taken to poultry farming, he owns his own fodder mill and has the largest farm in the area, the organisation seems to appreciate his enterprise and believes that it sets a good example to the small poultry farms.

9. Cultural components which make the fabric of their lives are completely ignored. There seems to be very little emphasis on using cultural activities and the educational process to make the underprivileged conscious of their oppressed situation. The non-formal education imparts skills that may improve material conditions a little. But increasing a worker's skill and proficiency without changing the production relationship and shifting this control into the hands of the majority, will only further strengthen those who control the economy.

10. A sound methodology and strategy will only evolve out of a clear ideology. Somehow all the group members do not share a common stand. Therefore, the basis on which the projects and beneficiaries have been selected is not clear in many cases.

11. There is no replica of the organization at the village level. The workers feel that the direct contact that the organization has and the excellent rapport it has established, are adequate. The lack of a village structure which contributes in the decision-making process and initiates action, must be a hindrance. People have begun to identify the project as a provider of help but this in the long run may limit its field of activities.

The programme seems heavily dependent on outside inputs and financial support. This is an unrealistic situation, and

cannot continue for ever. A great deal of thought has to be given to these aspects if the trust considers and plans phasing out from the area.

Doubling the per capita income:

Socio-economic background.--According to the 1971 census the Project area has a population of 64,205. The proportion of workers to total population is 45 per cent. Scheduled castes constitute 13.5 per cent of the population, while Scheduled Tribes constitute 2.8 per cent of the population in the project area. 83 per cent of the workers are engaged in agriculture as cultivators or agricultural labourers. The distribution of landholdings is highly skewed. 30.7 per cent of the households depending on agriculture are landless. Among those who own land the distribution is as follows.

Table I

Landholding size	Percentage of all landholdings falling in the group	Percentage of total cultivated area held by the group
Less than 2.5 acres	44.4%	11.2%
2.5 acres - 5.99 acres	23.7%	18.5%
5.0 acres - 9.99 acres	19.4%	27.1%
10.0 acres - 24.99 acres	10.5%	30.6%
Above 25 acres 11%	1.5%	12.6%

The climate is dry and irrigation facilities inadequate. Because of this, households with holdings of 10 acres or less may be categorised as small farmers, and we see that the overwhelming majority of cultivating families should be considered as weaker sections in the project area.

Due to limited irrigation facilities, every household in a village strives to own at least a small piece of land on the tank beds, with the result that landholdings are extremely fragmented. In one instance, 4.9 acres or so was held

among 40 different families. The plight of the agricultural labourer is worse. Wages are Rs.3/- for men and Rs.2/- for women (well below the stipulated minimum wages) and even this is not available for more than 6 months in the year.

The per capita gross income is Rs.562 per year (estimated by the agency's survey), or Rs.43.83 per month (Rs.1.46 per day) and this is only the average. With the distribution of assets as skewed as revealed in the table, one can expect the bottom 20 - 30 per cent to be very much poorer. The principal object of the society is to implement a comprehensive community development programme in a part of 'M' Block in such a way as to help farmers, particularly small farmers, become viable and to generate more employment opportunities in the area. This was proposed to be done in close cooperation, assistance and understanding with the Government of India and Government of Andhra Pradesh. According to the agency, the grants made available to the block works out a little over Rs.1/- per head of population per year. This meagre amount would not make any impact on the development activities needed for the area. More concretely the aim is to double the per capita income of the people in the area during the project period by:

- bringing cultivable waste into cultivation by reclamation and other development measures;
- increasing the acreage of irrigated land by 30 per cent;
- covering 7,800 acres under soil conservation methods;
- improving marketing and credit facilities so that 80 per cent of the farmers would be assured of maximum prices for their produce and the best inputs through timely credit;
- providing every village in the project area with a source of protected drinking water;
- providing public health facilities of an elementary nature for inhabitants of the area.

Activities.--Soil management and conservation:- The topography of the area is undulating with imminent problems of soil erosion. Soil conservation measures like contour bunding and stone bunding have been undertaken complementary to the government's efforts in these directions. Of the 7,800 acres envisaged to be conserved under this programme, the Society plans to undertake conservation and management of 3,120 acres. 50 per cent of the cost of contour bunding is treated as subsidy to the concerned farmer, and the remaining 50 per cent is treated as a loan. Reclamation of cultivable waste has also been given considerable importance. Reclamation is done on a large scale with the help of bulldozers obtained on hire from Andhra Pradesh Agro-Industries Corporation. Most of the farmers whose lands are converted under this scheme are marginal and small farmers and they are given a subsidy depending on the size of their landholdings.

Irrigation: - The highlight of the irrigation programme is the repair of minor irrigation tanks in the area. Through repairs of bunds, sluices and weirs, many of the tanks have been repaired and hold water even during the hot summer months, they also recharge wells in their command area. Needless to say, this has benefited a very large number of farmers. Community wells dug in tank beds have also benefited small and marginal farmers owning less than 5 acres of land. Besides these, digging of wells for farmers, providing them with a subsidy of a third of the cost of the wells subject to a maximum of Rs. 4,000, and sinking of bores in open wells providing part of the cost as subsidy and the rest as loans, is also undertaken.

Agricultural credit and Inputs.--Farm co-operation credit societies have been established in the project area with the aim of providing credit to their members for both short term and medium terms. Its membership is constituted as follows:

Table II

Size of landholding	Percentage of total members
0 - 0.5 acres ..	10
0.6 - 2.0 acres ..	20
2.1 - 5.0 acres ..	42.5
Above 5 acres ..	27.5

They have a revolving fund of Rs. 8,50,000 placed at their disposal by the Society for meeting credit needs. The Board of Directors include two representatives of the Society and the local extension workers. Besides crop loans which are short-term, medium-term loans are given for:

milk cattle
sheep units
poultry units of 50 to 100 birds each, and
selling and planting materials.

The distribution of land among farmers of different landholding size groups is given in the following tables:

Table III

Landholding size groups	Percentage of total
Less than 2.49 acres	41.7
2.50 - 499 acres	24.4
5.00 - 9.99 acres	16.9
10.00 - 24.99 acres	15.0
More than 25 acres	2.0

	100.0

Table IV

Landholding size groups	Crop loans	Milch cattle	Sheep development	Poultry development	Artisan loans
Less than 2.49 acres	24.6%	67.9%	54.4%	71.4%	44.8%
2.5 - 4.99 acres	26.8%	20.9%	21.6%	14.3%	55.2%
5.0 - 9.99 acres	22.0%	11.2%	9.5%	14.3%	
10.0 - 24.99 acres	23.0%		12.5%		
More than 25 acres	3.6%				

Milch animals are obtained from cattle markets and distributed to the small farmers on loans through the cooperative societies. Sheep units of improved breeds have also been distributed on credit by the society.

Day old chicks are reared for a period of 12 weeks and supplied to farmers on credit in units of 50 to 100 birds. The income from these units varied from Re.1/- Rs.1.25 per fowl per month and can only serve as a source of supplementary income.

Other measures towards increasing the per capita income of the people have involved attempts to improve agricultural practices in the area by starting two demonstration farms in which improved varieties of crops and ways of cultivation are tried, and through demonstrations popularised among farmers. This is influencing the farmers and is already showing results in terms of increased crop yield. To improve the milk yield in the area, the society decided to upgrade the animals through artificial insemination. A mini semen bank and six veterinary sub-centres have been set up in the project area for this purpose. The mini semen bank is being used for artificial insemination in 59 centres in and outside the project area. Nutritious fodder crops have also been popularised among cattle owners.

There is a demonstration layer unit of chicks, the proceeds

from which go partly to the T.B. sanatorium in the area for needy patients and the rest is marketed at a profit.

Village road construction has been undertaken as a necessary measure to help in the larger development, by connecting the village roads to the marketing centres.

C. Public Health, Drinking Water and Sanitation: The objectives of the programme are to provide health education, outpatient services, maternity and child health including supplementary nutrition and preventive immunisation, environmental sanitation control of communicable diseases, health and of school children, family planning (welfare) and collection of vital statistics. One field health unit and seven sub-centres were opened at convenient points. The field Health Unit is manned by a Doctor, two Auxiliary Nurses, Midwives, a Basic Health Worker, a Laboratory Technician and a voluntary worker stationed at the place. In addition, the Lady Doctor visits this centre once in a week. A six-bed hospital and a clinical laboratory are attached to this unit. Each sub-centre is manned by an ANM, a Basic Health worker and a Voluntary Worker. The Doctors visit the sub-centres regularly (twice in a week) and attend to out-patient work and other programmes of the project. The sub-centres have all been built on land made available by the Government or by the people and the building has residential accommodation for the ANM also. The people of the respective areas have been highly cooperative and in the initial stages they made available improvised rent-free accommodation for the location of the sub-centres and for the residence of the ANM. Subsequently, they made sites available free of cost for the location of permanent buildings and also made cash contribution for their construction. The out-patient services for villagers are rendered on all days of the week at a subsidised cost. Those who are seriously ill and those who require intensive care and hospitalization are

are sent to the hospitals with whom the society has entered into an agreement for the free treatment of the needy patients referred to by the latter.

Health education forms an important component of the programme and the different aspects of health problems are stressed through group health talks and by making use of pictorial charts and other audio-visual aids. Health awareness is being built up by steady and sustained efforts. The work is being done in the control of communicable diseases with the help of Government and other agencies. Water-borne diseases are chiefly responsible for morbidity and mortality in rural communities. To combat this, 23 open wells and 31 bore wells (of which 26 were successful) were constructed during Phase I of the project. All the minor drinking water sources are periodically and systematically disinfected by the health staff.

D. Education and Training:

20 centres for Adult Literacy have been functioning for the past one year. The animators teaching in these centres were trained in literacy teaching by the State Resource Centre at Tirupathi, besides which they have received training in improved farming methods and other relevant fields. The books published by Andhra Mahila Sabha and State Resource Centre are used for teaching literacy. The classes are conducted in the community building constructed earlier by the Society. These buildings are also used as venues for day school wherever necessary.

Training courses in poultry management and dairy management for dairy and poultry have been conducted with the help of competent experts, as part of the education for development.

Method of work:-

The extension workers and other officers visit the village and identify the various schemes useful to the community. The objects of the scheme and their usefulness is explained to the villagers and their participation in it in terms of cash or kind is sought. Once a community or group gets interested, the leader of the group has to be identified for further discussions

relating to local participation. In the construction of community wells, repairing of tanks and community buildings, the community contributes its labour. Beneficiaries for loans from the credit cooperative are identified with the help of the extension worker, or in response to requests from the villagers. A large number of applications is being received from time to time for assistance either directly by the society or through the local Block Development Officer. Steps are already being taken for handing over the various schemes now being financed and run by the Society to successor agencies. The Mini Scheme bank and three of the six insemination centres have been handed over to the Government. The credit cooperative societies are run under the supervision of the State Cooperative Department.

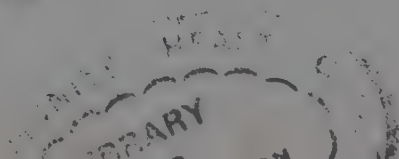
The community health sub-centres and the field health unit, it is hoped, will be taken over by the local hospitals or institutions like the Zilla Parishad or Panchayat Samithi. Two of the sub-centres have already been handed over to two local hospitals.

Similar steps are being taken to hand over all the schemes to different development organizations so that the work started by the society continues unaffected.

Administrative set up and Finances

The governing body of the society which is in-charge of the management of the affairs of the society has formed a project committee for implementation of the programme. The Project Committee has as its chairman the Collector of the district and has four other distinguished members prominent in the social life of the Project area. The project administration is headed by the Project Manager. He is assisted by the Accounts Officer and other administrative staff. The technical staff comprises of an Agronomist, Engineer, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Chief Medical Coordinator and Business Manager. These experts are responsible for carrying out programmes in their respective fields through Extension Staff at

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the field levels. At the moment, six of the staff members are on deputation from the government.

The community Development Project has a total budget of Rs. 84,90,000, most of which is received as grants from funding agencies abroad, while the balance has to be met through local contribution. A larger part of the local contribution has to come from the beneficiaries themselves either in cash, kind or labour.

Questions before us

1. Development here, has been identified with Economic growth. Experience in the past has shown that while the nation's growth rate increased (the decade 60-70s and 70-78) the condition of the poor either remained unaltered, or deteriorated because of the gross inequality in distribution. The question that arises is whether unless this basic malady is tackled, any rate of growth that is realistically possible can alter the state of affairs.

2. Credit facilities are extended to the farmers both in the form of short or medium-term loans. The short-term crop loans are an ever-existing need, and as soon as a loan is repaid, fresh loans are taken. As one of the members of the staff remarked, the credit facilities will never make the people self-sufficient, not in a decade to come. They are, therefore, permanently dependent on some external source of credit.

As regards medium-term loans, the loan for milk cattle and sheep are given to the people is not to help their subsistence but so that they may serve the needs of the handful of urban consumers. This is evident because earlier it was the breed of cattle which were sturdy and would serve for years as milk yields which could later be used for ploughing that the farmers preferred. Artificial insemination centres have promoted milk yielding breeds, the incentive to the farmers being the increase in demand for milk in the market. Milk from the villages flows to the chilling plant of Andhra Pradesh Dairy

Development Corporation, to be converted into milk powder, cheese, butter and ghee - products well beyond the pockets of the villagers.

The functions of sheep rearing by villagers is similar - providing the urban market with larger quantity of good meat. All the mutton and milk produced thus goes to the market, while there is none available at the village, even for the dairy farmers themselves. Production for the distant urban market as against production for local consumption has thus set in, and has been encouraged. Incidentally, this fits in with the overall picture, where resources are drained away from the producer at the village to the consumer mostly in the urban centre who can afford to have it.

3. A lot of work has been done by the Group in the area of irrigation, soil preservation and reclamation, and similar tasks. The emphasis is on speedy completion of the tasks, and is entrusted to contractors. Participation of the people is limited to making requests and contributing in part in cash or kind. Is this what we term people's participation?

4. A lot of emphasis seems to be laid on the 'profitability' in economic term of ventures, be it poultry or dairy farming or production of foodgrains. Competition is encouraged. Substantial loans have been given to farmers owning more than 10 acres and even those owning more than 25 acres. Nearly 24% of the crop loans have been given to farmers owning more than 10 and 25 acres of land and 2% to those owning more than 25 acres. It is obvious that loans given to these categories would help the middle and rich farmers to produce a large surplus sufficient to accumulate and circulate, perhaps, as loans among the poorer sections and consolidate their socio-political status. The damage thereof may nullify the meagre benefits obtained by the poor.

5. The magnitude of work done in the fields of soil reclamation and conservation, increasing irrigation facilities,

construction of roads and community building is definitely praiseworthy.

The society seems to play the role of a parallel government in the area, though as one which is far more efficient and delivers its goods, and one wonders, if it is at the same time serving as a palliative to people who are dissatisfied with the inefficiency and injustice inherent in the government machinery. Should people depend on the goodwill of an organization for the benefits that are rightfully due to them as people of this country and as tax-payers who through the indirect taxes contribute for a major share of the government revenue?

6. The very nature of activities has no place for the economically most backward sections of the community, like the landless. The benefits may at best trickle down to them in the form of increased employment opportunities, because of more than one harvest made possible with irrigation. Is this the only way benefits can reach the poor? How rich must the rich be before the poor manage to survive?

7. There are no people's committees or Sangams at the village level where the villagers could participate actively and make decision regarding the type of programmes they want and who the beneficiaries should be. In fact, though the development of land, water and people as a resource has been started as the of the programme, the first two have received maximum attention almost at the cost of creating the last as a by-product of the first two.

8. The only programme aided at development of people which is not economic development is the educational programme. The group witnessed a literacy class in action in the Harijan section of the village. One villager was reading fairly well about the word 'HOME'. The subject-matter seemed to bear no relevance to the reality the reader was placed in, for, it

was about a home with sunlight and fresh air, a home that was neat and clean. It seemed rather ironic, for they were all seated in a shabby hut constructed with poles covered by dry branches.

One of them when asked about his motivation for attending the class, said that it would enable them to improve their lives. They would be able to write petitions and talk confidently to the concerned officials. Another, who said he was a very poor man, when asked what he thought was the reason behind, came out with a surprising reply — 'I have never given a thought to it.' The incident mentioned above reveals the culture of silence in which the poor live as silent and unquestioning objects of history who do not do things but see things done to them.

Learning to read and write in itself is worth nothing if it does not serve as a tool with which to comprehend the work in which they live and of which they are a part; does not help to transform people as conscious makers of history. Does it really make any difference if the poor labourer puts a signature instead of a thumb impression on a pro-note or a blank sheet of paper that seals his doom? A further insight into the potential and problems of the growth-oriented model is provided by an impact study made by the comprehensive area development cooperation of the West Bengal Government. This study observes that irrigation programmes aimed at providing shallow tube-wells to private owners result in:

- further strengthening the relatively richer landowners by making them owners of irrigation water also.
- further concentration of operational control in the hands of a few relatively richer landowners. This is land reform in the reverse.
- a transfer of income from the poor to the rich by forcing the former to purchase water from the latter at a rate significantly higher than the cost.

- non-availability of a irrigation water, first in the neighbouring areas during the current year and then ultimately in all the areas due to the fatal fall in the water level due to excessive exploitation of ground water. According to them, economic programmes meant for the "benefit of the poor" more or less always end up in favour of the rich, due to the nature of the existing socio-economic structure.

The present pattern of acute concentration of land ownership coupled with near absence of employment or income earning opportunity outside of agriculture, compels the overwhelming majority of the poor farmers to seek:

- (i) consumption and production loans from the landlord-cum-moneylender even at a rate of interest exceeding 100% per annum
- (ii) beg for a small piece of land on lease, with 50% of the gross produce as rent
- (iii) make distress sales immediately after harvests to settle his old debts with the moneylender.

Thus investment opportunities in usury, rack-renting and speculative trading, each capable of fetching a rate of return as high as 100% per annum, have created a situation where investment for increasing production are far less attractive to the landowners. This obviously means that "maximisation of production" and increasing employment opportunities is impossible as long as the concentration of land ownership among a few continues unabated. The preceding case studies and impact study throw light on one dimension of growth-oriented programmes. The main components of which have been economic in nature. These programmes rely substantially on external resource input.

Another related aspect of this model is the approach of equipping people with technical skills. The assumption here is different in that, instead of actually pouring in external resources and developing the project area, it is the people who are developed. The belief is that it is necessary

to motivate people, provide them with technical assistance for today, develop it in them for tomorrow. This will create the conditions for a new society. The assumption is that people are not equipped adequately enough to participate meaningfully in production. The assumption is that employment opportunities exist and can be found within the existing structure. The assumption is that the system can be made to work efficiently and it is up to the people to equip themselves and develop their capacities to do so. New hospitals, new roads, new agricultural equipment pave the path to economic growth — modernization which will close the gap between classes, between the advanced world and the less developed nations. Technical skills provided to people form the foundation that must be developed for how long can resources and expertise be pumped in from without? Technical skills may prepare people for the future but what outlooks it projects about the present is at least as important.

Motivation and Technical Assistance Socio-Economic Backgrounds

Target area 'B' where the group is working consists of 109 villages (including hamlets) and has an approximate population of 52,000. The total land area is about 50,000 hectares and population density about 28 per sq. km. (almost double the average density in the district). A special feature of the area is the high concentration of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who constitute approximately 46 per cent of the total population. The large tribal population include the Santhals, Oraons, Hos and Mundas.

Most of the land in the area is rainfed. 70 per cent of the population holds land ranging from one acre to 10 acres with an average of 4.75 acres per family. 30 per cent of the population hold over 10 acres with an average of 16.25 acres per family. There is no one in the area who is landless.

72 per cent of the families have an average per capita daily income of approximately 0.11. 5 per cent has a daily income of

Rs. 2 per person, and only 10 per cent of them are above this level. The main source of income is agriculture. Paddy is the main crop, raised mainly for consumption. The privileged groups have taken to doing petty business and commerce to augment their agricultural income.

Rural indebtedness is among the target population as anywhere else. Nearly 71 per cent of the target population has at one time or the other taken loans from traders, banks, cooperative societies, Block Development funds, rice banks etc. Local traders (the affluent group in the villages) provide over 48 per cent of such credit for the poorer sections. Over 52 per cent of such credit is mainly used for productive purposes while the rest (48 per cent) is used for economic, social and health reasons.

Ideology and Philosophy.--In order to build a just society, devoid of exploitation of the poor, it is essential to enable people to play an effective role in shaping their own destiny. The philosophy of the group emerges out of a deep concern for the poor and the suffering of the masses. Centuries of social injustice and suppression have left the people helpless and their potentialities unused. The overall development of the society has no direct impact on the conditions of the masses with the domination of an unjust structure continuing. It is their conviction that "for the development of the weaker sections it is essential that a village community develop suitable structures that can provide them all essential economic services and that can be within their control. In the existing economic set-up a man of the weaker section, be he a producer or a consumer, cannot get the full benefit of his own village community.

Their programme is geared to building up an infrastructure that provides the services necessary for increasing production and generating job opportunities. Once the basic infrastructure has been created, the dedicated service of workers

and the timely availability of all inputs can accelerate the process of all-round development. Creating an infrastructure suited for development at the village level calls for a persistent effort and requires organizational capability in the people themselves. Motivation of people combined with technical assistance in their economic activities will create the right conditions for a new society.

Methodology.--Where the organization has a fairly good representation, it conducts a seminar lasting two days. At this seminar the office-bearers and the local members interact and bring out certain problems that are pertinent to that area. On the basis of this, the executive committee draws up economic activities for the benefit of the target population. The identification of areas of operation is done by Assistant Manager in consultation with their field and/or project officers. The stress of the entire operations seems to be on training programmes for various levels of grassroot workers. After the training, some of the workers are absorbed into the paid staff of the organization and are posted as Assistant Managers in the villages. They do not, however, get appointed in the villages to which they belong.

After identification of the areas of need, the direct beneficiaries and the Assistant Managers have the responsibility of implementing the activities planned. They also work on self-help forms that have been acquired for supporting the Managers and Assistants after the funds from the donor agencies are withdrawn. Village level meetings of the members of the group are convened, discussions held and conclusions communicated to their field/project officers in the main office by correspondence. The field/project officers visit the various managers and assistant managers in their respective villages once in three months at least. Monthly meetings are held at the central office when the field staff comes to collect their salaries and discussions are held between them and their respective

section heads. The working committee meets every month to discuss the various activities presented by the respective section heads.

As method of functioning, every year a general body meeting is organized in a village according to the convenience of the majority. On this occasion different courses of action are discussed, evaluated and new strategies decided upon. The responsibility for the initiation of action programmes as per the agreed strategy rests with a team of social workers, consisting of a full-time Executive Director, four Project Officers, two Office Assistants and fifteen rural development apprentices.

Activities.--As agriculture still remains the basis of the rural economy accounting for the sustenance of nearly 89 per cent of the population, the organization has concentrated its activities around the training of youth in agriculture. The majority of those engaged in these pursuits at present are small farmers and their technology is very simple.

A. Training of Rural Youth.--One of the important activities is a training programme. The group believes that local youth must play a vital role in community development. A six-month training programme for village youth was conducted in 1975. This training is very different from any other academic training, as it relies on heavy inputs of carefully designed in-service experience. The tools used for training are formulated from real life situations of the target group. Books and other formal media only play a subsidiary role in the programme.

As there is the problem of the educated unemployed, this programme also aims at creating job opportunities for village youth. Rural areas are badly in need of the services of such men. As a result, there is vast scope for their employment. The candidates selected are between 20 - 30 years old. They have to be at least high school graduates. The candidate is sponsored by the people of a cluster of villages and the sponsoring group has to pledge support to this candidate after his successful completion of training. Candidates are selected after a written test (to assess their intelligence and aptitude)

and an interview by a selection committee. Training is imparted to the candidates in about ten different modules. The first module begins with an orientation at the main office on rural life situation and lasts for ten to fifteen days. Thereafter the trainees are sent to different areas to stay and establish rapport with the villagers for fifteen days to a month. In the subsequent modules lasting from two to three months, the candidates stay in their own respective areas to gain as much experience as possible through observation, participation and discussions as per a pre-designed schedule. The trainees are then called to the centre to report on their experience. The experience as reported by each candidate is carefully studied and analysed. The trainees identify crucial problems encountered by villagers. Identification of problems leads to planning of viable projects according to the priorities set by the villagers themselves.

This becomes the basis for determining the actual course of action. The trainee is given the required skills and know-how by professionally qualified and experienced persons through discussions, forums, apprenticeship courses and the setting down of appropriate guidelines. During their stay in villages the trainees are under the constant supervision of the local committees of the respective areas. They are also supervised by the staff who use check-lists, personal diaries and mailed letters to assess performance. People's active participation constitutes an important element in the whole process of project planning. Every effort is made to first tap existing local resources in the villages to meet the requirement of the planned projects. When the resources available in the villages are inadequate, local banks and various donor agencies are approached for the necessary help.

When the sources of financial aid and other requirements are ascertained, arrangements are made for the execution

of planned projects. The trainees assist the villagers in the implementation of the projects, and the officers of the organization supervise the whole execution.

B. Providing Financial Assistance.--Although small farmers and artisans have the necessary means (land or skills) of production, they lack financial resources. As a result, they are unable to make a beginning. For such people, the group has made some headway by finding sources of financial support from the nationalised banks. The organization stands guarantee for the loans advanced, and financial assistance of this kind has made small farmers and artisans fairly successful in expanding the sphere of their activities and improving their economic status.

In one of the village communities, an Agro-Service Cooperative of the people has been planned. A modest godown has been constructed to keep stock of all essential agricultural inputs. At the people's own cost, a paid manager is appointed to help them run this cooperative. One of the banks has agreed to provide them with the capital. It is expected that a venture of this nature will rid the people of their dependence on outside merchants and make necessary technical know-how and better economic services accessible.

C. Providing of Facilities.--The group has undertaken to set up demonstration plots for growing improved varieties of crops, to supply agricultural inputs, seeds, manure, fertilizers, pesticides etc., and to provide irrigation in a small way. For improved methods of cultivation the farmers are also given training in the use of agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers etc. It has been estimated that the provision of irrigation facilities in the area also will be very costly. Therefore, attempts are also being made to increase the production of various traditional crops in the existing dry farming conditions.

In order to free the villager from the stranglehold

of middlemen, a Sales Service Scheme has been set up. As the tribals are often ignorant of the actual price of the commodity, the petty traders are able to buy the produce at a very low price. Under this scheme, the saleable commodities from different families are stocked in the godown and sold on a wholesale basis at an appropriate time. The organization also encourages small savings which are helpful to the members for capital investment in agriculture.

Indebtedness is a characteristic feature of the villages in this area. For social as well as agricultural activities, the tribals borrow money from the local moneylenders by mortgaging their cultivable land in lieu of the interest charged. To help those families who have lost their basic sources of livelihood, a provision has been made to reclaim mortgaged lands. With the conviction that too much dependence on agriculture will not solve the economic problems of the people, the organization started in 1974 a course in tribal entrepreneurship to train unemployed young men, in close collaboration with St. Xavier Institute of Social Service. The organization believes that starting business pursuits by trained entrepreneurs can go a long way in breaking up the existing system of business monopoly of the merchants from within or outside the village community.

Under the educational programme, one Balvadi had been set up for pre-primary education. The trainees are also running an adult education programme which emphasises functional literacy and the teaching of agricultural techniques. As a part of future planning, the organization hopes to start certain new development programmes. Some of the programmes that have already been decided upon include a workshop for appropriate village technology and a Health Insurance Programme. According to them the concrete result achieved so far through these activities indicates that the process of development

can be boosted up, and a sound socio-economic system established as the foundation for the liberation of man.

Questions before us

1. It is not evident whether the land reform training focusses on the loopholes of the Act and on its conciliatory and conformist nature meant to delay or stop the total re-allocation of land to the peasant. The extension network provides an opportunity to know the facilities available in the existing institutions, government banks, panchayats etc., but are the trainees made to understand it critically?

2. The selection method of the candidates for training brings out two factors:

- the demand to be trained seems to be because of the specific allurements of the possibility of getting a job;
- candidates are selected through competitive written and oral tests.

Should their capacity for organizing people not be taken into account for selection? Does the process, as it stands today, not refute the content of the present educational system but accept the methods and techniques?

3. The trained youth are sent out as catalysts to the clusters where they are posted. They are expected to build up rapport in the villages but they have never been involved in organizing people before. As a result, they restrict themselves to teaching the people what they have learned in the institution. Hence there is a series of stereotyped activities that is conducted in each village.

4. Regarding the provision of loans through nationalised banks, experiences in other programmes have shown that because of indebtedness to the local moneylenders, the loanee attempts to pay back these loans which carry much higher rates of interest. Thus, the additional income earned by the poor with the facilities provided by the bank often leaks out to the

moneylender. The moneylender not only usurps the income which initially accrued to the poor, but also makes him into a defaulter with the bank, making it impossible for the bank to advance him any further loans. The result is that the loanee becomes a permanent client of the moneylender.

5. The farm demonstration in the case of this project is used merely as a means of transferring technological skill to the trainees. There is no attempt at raising the consciousness level of the youth.

In another context, the West Bengal Comprehensive Area Development Programme seems to have made some headway. Here, the farm of a sub-marginal farmer owning or operating about 1 acre of land is taken up for demonstration, and not that of the "progressive" and often rich farmers. The project seeks to demonstrate through this scheme that a peasant household operating between one and two acres of land could manage to get two square meals a day, if he owns land and has the wherewithal to use modern technology. While demonstrating this it seeks to raise vital questions like —

Why are the majority of the peasants hungry most of the time?

Why are the landless peasants not provided with at least one acre of land? Particularly when rich landlords choose to leave their land fallow and do not use modern technology.

The project thus transforms Farm Demonstration into a tool for raising mass consciousness rather than for extending mere technological skill. "But it is no use claiming that technology is neutral. Technology like everything else is linked to a system of values and those values are intrinsic to a certain economic system. One may not join party politics but one's ideas, skills and behaviour — one's very presence — carry political weight. Technology is as much a political question, as any other aspect of development for power underlies

all technology. In fact, it seems to be the one factor that runs through every aspect of development — economic, political, medical, educational. Insecticides, tractors, mechanical agricultural equipment, drugs..... with which we propose to solve the problems of the third world will have powerful social implications." A very apt example of this technological power game is seen in the examples cited earlier of the green revolution and industrial development in India.

6. These programmes by their very nature do not come to grips with the social reality that exists in the areas of their work. They do not see social reasons and conflicts that exist in the society — the tensions and pulls of different interest groups — and assume that what is good for one is good for all without taking into consideration the fact that what is aimed at helping the poor is in fact strengthening the rich.

7. Another important stand that these groups take, albeit very subtly, is that the poor peasants are passive, apathetic, distrustful and resist change. Taking a positive stand despite this obstacle, these groups seek to give them a chance.

It cannot be denied, however, that the growth-oriented groups conduct these extensive programmes very efficiently. Many of them thrive within the existing system and seem to be making the system work but how far this is because they are operating in isolation and at the possible expense of other areas, is a question we need to ask ourselves for "underdevelopment is not a passive condition but an active process. For four hundred years the colonies were exploited for their resources by countries that now call themselves advanced and this process continues even today. Furthermore, underdevelopment occurs not only in the so-called third world but within advanced areas too.

new systems
of human organisation
are being dared -
systems that assume
that people can
co-operate and work
together

CHAPTER III

COOPERATIVES

Numerous questions and doubts have been raised about the extent to which economic programmes can in fact change the existing situation of poverty and inequality. The "growth approach", it is argued, protects and encourages, first and foremost, the individual's formal freedom to go ahead and acquire wealth and is based on competition in the market economy. This position by its very nature supports and strengthens the position of the "haves"; the dice is loaded against the weak. Hunger, ill-health, unemployment - poverty itself, they say, is the inevitable by-product of capitalism. This view denies that economic growth will automatically reduce social tensions. In fact, it will only be to the disadvantage of those who can compete least. They emphasise that ignoring the existing unevenness of distribution of resources and channellizing resources from the top will only strengthen the top leading to a widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. The possibility of change lies only in the challenging and changing the very pattern of ownership, which is perpetuated and strengthened by the competitive system.

Before moving on to analysing in detail the assumptions and experiences of this approach in the later chapters, it would be both necessary and worthwhile to examine approaches that seek to mitigate conflict between different groups and carry forward the process of development within the existing structure. One instance of this attempt is found in the cooperative movement.

"Cooperation has been seen as an economic system with social content." The economic ideals fall into the realm of a cooperative's existence as a business enterprise and its social bearing is an outcome of it being an association of persons with explicit ideals concerning human relationships - those of universality, democracy, liberty, fraternity, unity and self-help.

In a cooperative enterprise a group of people voluntarily join together to provide themselves goods and services and control of the cooperative rests equally with all the members. Cooperation is the organized working together for mutual benefit — a business enterprise with democratic ownership and control by members who have common needs, serving themselves on a non-profit basis and receiving benefits proportional to their participation. As distinguished from private business, a cooperative* :

1. obtains services by the members for the members at cost by rendering services to others
2. is voluntary by its very nature
3. is an association of human beings as opposed to that of capital.
4. aims to promote the economic interests of the members (alone)
5. distributes surplus in proportion to the contribution made for the earning of the surplus.

In a cooperative society, persons combine together, pool their resources and everyone has equal responsibility in attaining the end. The limiting of one vote per member, elimination of voting by proxy, requirement of regular reports from executives, constant education, elimination of competition as a necessary economic motive within the society are all elements that seek to reconcile the thrust of economic growth with the shortcomings of the capitalist system.

Cooperative endeavours, it is assumed, streamline the processes of production and distribution, create greater participation and hence lead to economic democracy.

It is assumed that cooperatives form the means by which:

- (a) The economic, social and cultural situation of persons with limited resources and opportunities

* I.L.O. Recommendations (1966) No.(2).

will improve. The accent is on encouraging their spirit of initiative.

- (b) personal and national capital resources are improved by the encouraging of thrift, the elimination of usury and the bound use of credit.
- (c) the measure of democratic control of economic activity and more equitable distribution of surplus is engendered
- (d) social conditions are improved
- (e) the technical expertise of members is enhanced.

The inherent assumption upon which the approach is based is that the net-so-strong can combine cooperatively and get the same advantages as a the strong.

It is far beyond the scope of this limited effort to venture on the path of attempting to analyse the dimensions of the cooperative movement in India or even to assess the impact. It would however be necessary to note the widely divergent conditions that exist in each state with regard to cooperatives. "Maharashtra and to a lesser extent Gujarat are recognised as examples of substantial and diversified cooperative development. In the former state, it has emerged as a massive political force that has transformed parts of the countryside. In Gujarat, cooperative rural credit is well developed and milk cooperatives there have received wide acclaim. In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the movements have been mainly officially sponsored ones. The concentration is on the small planters and self-employed artisans. Punjab has a great deal of cooperative credit and marketing but the movement has characteristics typically arising out of control by government. In the eastern states, the movement has been weak."

The cooperative movement has played a key role in Indian Planning. The plans required a substantial pumping in of resources into agriculture and in this, credit cooperatives were seen as better fitted to reach the weaker section, than commercial banks. The plans set forth sizable development of cooperative farming, processing industries and of dairying. They further implied considerable coordination between public

sector agencies and cooperatives. Quite obviously cooperatives in Indian planning enjoyed great recognition as instruments of planning and also as agents of protecting the weaker sections*. There are three important areas of the cooperative movement in which the Indian State has contributed substantially:

Legislative.--Recognition by Government under the Indian Cooperative Societies Act. Numerous rules have been framed that confer privileges on cooperatives e.g., exemption of shares and dividends from attachment. The Reserve Bank has been enabled to play a dynamic role in the movement by the setting up of a National Agricultural Credit Fund for granting long and short-term loans to state governments to enable them to subscribe to the share capital of cooperative credit institutions.

Administrative.--Each state has a cooperative department to initiate the organization and guide the activities of cooperatives.

Financial.--The government according to some has tended in India to over-administer and underfinance the movement. "State partnership" however forms the basis of cooperatives through share capital contributions loans, grants and subsidies.

Against this background we review the functioning of two cooperatives visited by the follow-up group. Most voluntary agencies have, to a greater or lesser degree, explored the possibility of using this instrument as a means of furthering the work of their organizations. Faced with the overall problems of indebtedness, under-utilization of resources on the one hand and the fundamental realization that the advancement of one individual is by no means identifiable with that of the community, they have looked to cooperatives for the answer, the philosophy of which is all-encompassing. The economic dimensions of the

* Cooperation and the Dynamics of Changes (ed) Chinchanker & Nanjoshi, pp. 177-178.

problem have got to be grappled with but not at the cost of other factors such as housing, education, health etc. An ideal cooperative would include all these. Of the two cooperatives visited, one has tried to include only the poor and the other has treated the village as a harmonious entity.

Farmers' Service Centre: This cooperative society was started in 1974 as one of the efforts in the integrated development of the backward Y Block of Andhra Pradesh. This cooperative was initiated as a means to develop the area as a hinterland to the fast-growing city of Visakhapatnam. Besides helping the marginal and submarginal farmers, it hopes to provide employment to the educated unemployed on an extensive scale.

The society aims to:

- (a) undertake schemes for the integrated development of the area in the field of agriculture, industrial, social, cultural, recreational and educational including health educational activities, and any other activity decided from time to time for the socio-economic development of the members
- (b) undertake steps to implement schemes like bee-keeping, dairy, poultry, sheep-rearing, vegetable gardening, sericulture and pisciculture and other auxiliary and subsidiary occupation in order to augment the meagre income of the villagers.
- (c) provide the necessary storage, transport and marketing facilities for the products through rent, hire, or lease of godowns, depots, trucks, vehicles etc.
- (d) conduct or arrange for a complete survey of the potential for irrigation, water sources including groundwater through Government agencies or private consultants or through any other appropriate agency
- (e) help the members to get all the facilities including that of credit in order to exploit the above resources through sinking, energisation or revitalisation of filter points, digging of wells etc.

Activities:

1. This area is a drought-prone one, and there are no perennial rivers. Top priority was given to the development of ground water resources. A preliminary survey by the State Ground Water Department followed by a more detailed survey by the Natural Resources Development Cooperative Society Limited (Hyderabad), was carried out. Several zones for ground-water resources were studied. The digging of 100 open wells, drilling of 100 filter points and revitalisation of 100 existing wells is being implemented. 300 wells have been energised either with electric or diesel pumps.

2. The society is actively involved in encouraging dairying. The State Bank of India and the Andhra Bank adopted this scheme in three villages to start with. A total of 210 marginal farmers, landless labourers and educated unemployed were given loans ranging from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/- to buy milch cattle.

As an outlet for the milk produced in the area, seven milk centres were started and the milk was supplied to the Visakapatnam Dairy every day. The centres have since been handed over to the Government's intensive Milk Supply Scheme. Compared to the earlier 20% milk surplus, today 90% is being sold through these centres. There has also been a marked decline in the rate of milk spoilage. The programme provides a number of jobs.

3. The Government has leased 206 acres of land to the society for the cross-breeding of dairy animals. 150 cows of the local breed will be pastured on this farm, where fodder is being developed and other infrastructure provided. Both artificial insemination and natural servicing are sold to marginal and small farmers and landless labourers.

4. A pilot project to determine whether it is economical to handfeed the calves of high-yielding milch buffaloes until they can stand on all roughage ration has also been started. After this, they will be supplied to agricultural labourers and marginal farmers. At present many such calves are allowed

to starve by the urban milk traders who buy buffaloes instead.

5. The society has initiated the attempt to improve local stock of cattle. A herd of local stock has been reared on a 40-acre farm and through artificial insemination the stock improved - the calves sold to the farmers after a year. This has brought about considerable improvement in the local stock within a short span of time.

6. Poultry farming unknown in this area is being popularised by the Society. One day old chicks have been reared to 10 weeks in the society's demonstration unit and have been supplied to the marginal farmers. This is done because -

- the society does not have the funds to rear these chicks upto the laying stage and maintain them for one year and
- the marginal farmers do not have the necessary expertise and medical supervision to rear the one-day olds to 10 weeks. Hence it was felt that the society with its technical competence should take up the supply.

7. A Youth programme is being planned under this scheme to:

- (a) expose the youth to the potential in rural life and retain their interest in their surroundings. It is hoped that young men will find their bearings in the villages
- (b) show that agriculture and allied activities can be made economically viable.
- (c) expose the village to new techniques and methods.

To realize these objectives, on May Day the first of a series of 10-day courses in poultry and Dairy Management for potential beneficiaries was started. The trainees were 30 women selected from the families of marginal farmers and landless labourers. The classes are held during the day to enable women to return home before dark. The focus of the programme is on women. One of the major achievements is that women who had hitherto been confined to their homes are now coming together during the day, away from their villages, to attend the course.

Further, the Trust that has been the initiator of the society has stipulated that loans be granted only to the trained. Consequently, it is the women in the area who will have first priority in the selection.

Another batch of women were trained to stitch leaf plates. Nearly 40 women were trained for five days. Acquisition of this new skill will enable them to earn Re.1/- a day in their spare time in their own homes.

8. The society is now in the process of intensifying its activities. It has decided to take up 10 villages and make an all-out effort to promote all the activities in these. An intensive survey of the needs of the villages with an identification of the beneficiaries is being carried out. It is expected that 650 filter wells and 10 dug wells would be made available through bank finance.

Questions before us

It may be relevant to quote from a research report of United Nations Research Institute on "Rural Cooperatives as Agents of Change". "That rural cooperatives in developing areas today bring little benefit to the masses of poorer inhabitants of these areas and cannot be regarded as agents of change and development for such groups". The study shows very poignantly that many cooperatives are soon being appropriated by the elite of a given community who when control leadership, access to the cooperative facilities (technology, credit etc.). A process of further stratification rather than a process of equalisation of rural society is the result."

On the whole it must be asked whether highly stratified rural communities provide a suitable environment for the introduction of cooperatives as agents of overall development, and whether "more radical alternatives" to the reform of existing cooperative institutions would not be a policy seeking to evolve new kinds of local organisations, units of rural action, that would more effectively stimulate peasant participation and more effectively involve the poorer member of the community.

1. A glance at the activities and main thrust of this society reveals that this venture is essentially "economic" in its orientation. The social and cultural elements considered to be indispensable in a cooperative endeavour have not been stressed upon. The educational component is largely restricted to the imparting of technical skills. Although the relevance and need for this cannot be underestimated, it must be emphasised that a major assumption in a cooperative enterprise is the existence of social ideals. It is this that differentiates a cooperative from a business enterprise and yet, it is this aspect that is more often than not underplayed.

2. The members of this society are aided in the management by a board of directors headed by the district collector. Officials, and educated youth also contribute. Given this essentially hierarchical framework, the question that arises is about how far it is then possible to adhere to the principles of democracy and equality, that underlie the cooperative principles, which is, in fact, a fundamental tenet differentiating it from private business enterprises. If the society is to be one which the members have planned and entered in a real spirit of cooperation that will help in community building as opposed to one which is cooperative merely as a legal body then, both these factors will need to be dwelt upon.

3. The technocratic emphasis of this society then broaches questions of whether advance in the limited spheres of better production, and enhanced milk yields, poultry etc. will, in fact, engender development. What is the guarantee that increased milk yields and ownership of hens will give the children more milk and more eggs to eat - better nutrition and better health. It has, in fact, been found in other experiments that the consumption of these has decreased once their production has been made commercial. The increased income contributes only to increased conspicuous consumption. What are the means by which a cooperative grapples with the problems such as these. Another example of development not coming as

envisaged is found in the establishment of a cooperative poultry in an area where commercialized poultry farming was unknown. A big farmer in the cooperative saw the potential and had the available resources to develop it. He started his own fodder production unit and in time unable to withstand his superior production and distribution channels, the society became defunct and the members were re-employed as wage labourers on his farm. It becomes obvious then that "the weak are not in the same position as the not so strong, certainly not if the strong have in addition a whole reservoir of institutional strength.

A Fishermen's Cooperative: This experience of the organisation of fishermen's cooperative falls in the second category of cooperatives. It shows the opposition a group has to face, their struggles within and without, and now, after it has been organised, they are questioning the whole approach, which is in fact the greatest struggle. In this sense the rich experience and the critical attitude of the group to its own work is an eye-opener to other groups.

A profile of the Area and Population: These fishing villages stretched along the tip of Kerala coast, are clustered and densely populated. The population is mainly Christian, with a few isolated Muslim and Hindu fishing communities. Caste groupings exist among fisher folk although all fisherfolk of one community belong to the same caste with no hierarchical set up. Normally when fisherfolk bring their catch to the shore, it is auctioned by a middleman. The small merchants then take it to the different markets. The bulk of the transactions are made on a part-credit basis, and more often than not, when the final settlement is made, the fisherfolk are at the losing end. The fisherman is trapped by the ever-tightening vicious circle of exploitation propagated by those who own, own, or claim to own, the land on the seashore on which his dilapidated hut stands; by those who entice him with credit during the lean fishing season at prohibitive interest rates (60-120%) by middlemen merchants, and by the educated in his

community who now have left fishing in favour of other 'more respectable' jobs. The women play an important role in the community. Traditionally their function was to carry the fish collected by the menfolk to the market where they disposed it directly to the consumers. The man still is the head of the family and consequently the main maker. Her status in society is no different from the status of women in other parts of India. Religion continues to play a major role in their lives. Having to fight the mighty forces of nature to earn their living, it seems inevitable that they put all their faith in things beyond their own control. Their religious life is beset with rituals and ceremonies and superstitions. Many ceremonies and rituals are related to sea, boats and fishing. The entire life of the Christian fisherman revolves around the church as an institution. Everyone of the hundreds of churches that line the coastal road of Trivandrum district have been built by using the daily Church tax fisherfolk pay.

Initiatives and Intangible strings of Hope.—The organisation was initiated by the Bishop in the area in 1961 to help the under-privileged of his diocese of whom 150,000 are members of the fishing community. The organization began helping the fisherfolk by making boats and nets available through cooperatives and an understanding that they would repay it in instalments. But since it worked through the church, which has always been considered as a charity organization, the question of repayment was not taken seriously and the scheme failed.

Realising that it was difficult to work in the existing villages where the accumulated problems were too massive to tackle, the organization decided to work with a few families in a selected place. If this new experiment was successful, they planned to extend the work to the other fishing villages. They selected an uninhabited coastal village and purchased some 30 acres of land to create the village. The programme was started by constructing low-cost houses through a house-building cooperative society. To create the community,

50 fisherfolk families from 7 different villages who were willing to come and stay in the 'New village' were selected. Those who came to live here had nothing but the intangible springs of hope to cling on to, nothing to lose by undertaking this risk. Each family was given 10 cents of land, a few trees and fishing nets.

The initial approach was that of community building and community development based on self-help. Living with the people, the working team was always at their disposal and a feeling of togetherness began to grow, though they were from different places. Initially most of the community workers were from abroad all women. The only guiding factor for the team was to commence with the needs that the people felt and expressed, to involve the people as much as possible and to keep the methods of operation as simple and as open as possible.

Many programmes were initiated in the village like public health programme, clubs for boys and girls, saving schemes, nursery and croche and many other activities. The basic idea behind each programme was to initiate an informal educational process to initiate change, to build awareness and inspire confidence in the people. Hence much time was spent in trying to make the people understand what was going on, encouraging their involvement and helping them to take responsibility.

After about 7 years of such work, the team began to realize that no amount of community building would be effective if the economic matrix which formed the infrastructure of the community was not radically reorganised. Study and inquiry revealed that unless the ownership of land, credit, production, marketing and saving were linked and controlled by the fisherfolk themselves, they would not be able to get free from the clutches of the exploitative forces.

Round about this time, one great need always being expressed by the people was the need for a church in the New Village so that they could really consider it as their

own village. The team decided that their task was to see how this activity could be used to bring the people in grips with reality, and not *prima facie* reject it.

Money for the church was to be collected through individual daily shares of 5% of the catches, according to their traditional practice.

When the fisher folk brought their share for the church funds in the evenings, the actual amounts brought always varied from the value of the catch. The fisherfolk knew that this difference was not because they were being dishonest. At the evening meetings they were able to isolate and analyse each one of the reasons; indebtedness to the moneylender who reduced the daily interest from the value of the day's catch. Merchants who owed the fisherfolk money for the previous day's catch returned only part of the money due saying that they had incurred heavy losses, auctioneers had to be paid for auctioning fish. The community worker talked to them about the possibility of cooperation in selling their fish; appointing a man of their own who could auction all their catch and also collect the money from the merchants; the possibility of saving where each may save small amounts, but keep it all together and thus help each other in time of need.

After one such meeting the fisherfolk continued to argue and discuss among themselves. Attempts were made to communicate with the middle man who seemed interested but who refused to give in and asked to be paid back the entire amount. Finally the fisherfolk came to the conclusion that even if it was to build a church, they had to first have control over the produce of their hard labour. They had reached the crest of their emotional enthusiasm. They decided to use the Rs.1,000/- and the initial working capital and wanted the community workers to sit with them to plan details of the strategy for action and within a few days the campaign to free themselves from the moneylender and sell their fish by themselves was started. The campaign had only one aim and it was expressed by the fisherfolk

in two succinct words — 'Nanakku Vijayakanam' (We must succeed). After the start of the cooperative, the priest who used to come to the village to say Mass on Sundays, was threatened by the moneylenders who were on the Church Committee of the neighbouring parish from where the priest came, and prevented him from attending to the New Village.

Innumerable other attempts were made to crush the movement. The moneylenders succeeded in getting the support of the parishioners of six neighbouring villages to raise certain complaints regarding the method of fishing used by the fisherfolk of the new village, for they had introduced fishing with hook and line which was new to this coastal tract where the majority of the fisherfolk used only a beach net with which fish can be caught without going to the sea. The people around were instigated to say that since fisherfolk of the new village went out into the sea to catch fish with the hook and line, the original settlers of that coastal area suffered a fish famine! It was therefore demanded that for three months of the year — December to February — they should not go for hook fishing. This hard proposition was supported by the Panchayat, some officials of the Department of Fisheries, local politicians and parish priests.

After long hours of deliberation with the community workers, fisherfolk of the New Village accepted the proposition just to show the others that they would stand united. During the first two weeks of this period of restriction on fishing, when they suffered a great deal, the moneylender approached the people of the new village and said that the restriction would be lifted if they agreed to sell the fish through him. On hearing this the people discovered that the real reason behind the whole plot and they refused to accept his suggestions or money. Since this was a technical problem, they decided to call in an expert who was persuaded by the powerful to give his verdict in compliance with their wishes. According to whom it was a human issue, so the people of the new village have to comply.

members of the cooperative managed to convene another meeting in the Panchayat Office. All the leaders including the priests wanted to continue the restriction. At this juncture, one member of the cooperative stood up and said that they could not live without working and that they had decided to break the restriction and go fishing from the next day onwards, because they realised that this whole issue was a big hoax. The pandemonium caused by this bold statement of a 'solitary' fisherman was momentous. They came back from the meeting, reported their decision and informed every one to prepare to go fishing the next day. They lined up their catamarans on the beach, prepared their hooks and lines and also gathered all kinds of weapons to be used against anybody who might dare to stop them from implementing their decision.

It is more honourable for a fisherman to die fighting for his rights in the sea which is the source of his living rather than starve to death on the land, was the rationale of that moment. Hearing about all the happenings and the determination, the opponents withdrew from the fight. From then onwards the cooperative started to function again.

Activities:-

A. The Fisherman's Cooperative.--The Fishermen's cooperative is the central people's organization of the village since it deals with the aspects concerned with their source of livelihood. However, since the fisherfolk realised that their problem was not in the realm of production (contrary to the assumption of the State) but more in the realm of the marketing and credit, the cooperative performed a multipurpose function. The credit production marketing saving link established within it has found to produce the more desired results of increasing fish production (by providing more equipment to each member) ensuring good prices (by a the auctioning system), faster and higher repayment of loans (by linking credit to marketing through production) and the creation of a savings fund (by

introducing an element of savings as a deferment of immediate consumption). The Cooperative has a managing committee of four active fishermen and three nominees of the Government. For conducting the day to day affairs they have a paid Secretary and a number of employees who manage the various activities undertaken by it. All the employees are appointed and paid by the fisherfolk and are answerable directly to the committee. This cooperative is one of the few fisheries cooperatives in Kerala that takes an integrated approach to the needs of its members. Apart from providing credit and facilities for marketing the fish, the cooperative supplies its members (and non-members) with fishing requisites such as nylon twine, hook and lines at fair prices. It runs a net fabrication centre that aims at providing employment and fair wages to women of the village. It also runs an essential commodities store which caters for the whole village.

From 1970 onwards, the cooperative has been able to accumulate some returns (profits). It has financed, with the initial working capital of about Rs.40,000/- the purchase of fishing equipment worth over Rs.2,00,000/- (by the quick circulation of loan repayments). Most fisherfolk who have been members for 3 - 4 years have been able to get all types of fishing equipment needed to fish throughout the year. The per capita income of such members had doubled and without doubt the quality of their general living standards and awareness of the world at large had increased markedly.

B. Other Activities:

A house-building cooperative society, dispensary and health programmes, girls guild and Vanita Kendra, a nursery school and the boys' club are a few of the other activities undertaken by the group. The housing cooperative was one of the first programmes undertaken by the group and was later handed over to the community to manage. Soliciting active participation

of the people in its management remained an unfulfilled dream, as the members did not feel that it was their organization. The slow repayment and the piling up of outstanding loan disqualified all members from contesting in the election.

The dispensary which emphasised on preventive medicine primarily aims at educating the people to understand and solve their own health problems.

In the same manner, the nursery school education focusses on trying to invoke in children a perception of their immediate surroundings and the cultural aspects of their community life. Thus all the activities were built around education that was geared to raising the level of awareness in the community.

The activity of the group have been in the meanwhile extended to other villages around, and the team increasingly feels the necessity for a deeper involvement with the communities where they are working. Today 38 villages have come into contact with this community development programme. With the growth of the cooperative, many things began to change in the community. The fisherfolk realised that their catch would bring money and so they began to bargain for a good price. They began to see the folly of the past and on the whole, they began to know more, have more and participate more.

Today, their cooperative is beyond doubt the only fishermen's cooperative that is completely controlled by rural fisherfolk and certainly the only village cooperative that undertakes to sell all the fish of its members. With the coming together of the men, it was imperative that women come together, as well. Once they came together it was up to them to decide what they could do. They wanted to do something constructive. They decided that they would meet every month and a committee to take the initiative to organize the women was formed.

Since then, they have had their meetings regularly and

have become quite a force in the village. Their meetings include both the spiritual aspect and also discussion on social problems. Officially they are a registered Mahila Samajam (Women's organization) which puts them in contact with government machinery, a contact which is of much educational value in helping them to realise how government decisions reach the grassroots. As a result of the various activities undertaken, there has certainly been a marked change in the role of women in community life.

The group chose this cooperative structure as the first step to change the economic organization in the fishing community and the means for their continuous education. They have today come to a conclusion that the cooperative structure, in spite of being an important way by which equitable distribution could be ensured, when experimented within small pockets, can become a capitalistic institution in itself.

Today they also realise that they need a much more direct approach in contrast to a vague one, the latter being one in which the events and issues are dealt with as they come about instead of spotting out events and stimulating the issues that will help in the awareness building process.

Questions before us

The group's own reflection explains very clearly the transition of the group from economic welfare to organization. 'Today we speak about mass movement and mass organization. A couple of years ago, we spoke about community development and various kinds of projects. Approaches change and science develops with experience and experimentation so long as there is an eagerness to learn and a commitment to the cause of liberation.'

Cooperatives, however innovative and participatory, are conditioned in their functioning by the socio-political milieu into which they are inserted. Though cooperatives in abstract may be value-neutral institutions, in practice, they

are forced to comply with the values underlying the system of which they are a part.

Thus, in the case of the fishermen's cooperative mentioned above, the fishermen of the New Village have become a closed group resisting the increase in numbers of members in the cooperative. This attitude is understandable, because whatever the 'ideal' may be, the reality is that sale of fish is controlled by the market economy where there is stiff competition, and production is basically profit-oriented and not need-based. Hence, the whole orientation of the members of the cooperative tends to be influenced by competitiveness.

It may not be out of context here to quote from a research report of the United Nations Research Institute on Rural Cooperatives as agents of change.

The report is very clear that "Cooperatives in under-developed countries bring little benefits". "Cooperatives are soon appropriated by the elite of a given community who control leadership, access to cooperative facilities etc. A process of further stratification rather than of equalization is the result". "On the whole, it must be asked whether highly stratified rural communities themselves provide a suitable environment for the introduction of cooperatives as agents of overall development.

The roots of cooperation as a formal organization must be carefully noted. They are the direct descendants of Medieval European guilds, of mutual self-help associations typical of early British Industrialization and the result of the social experimentation of the utopian socialists. It is paradoxical but true that the system took its birth amidst conditions of conflict created by early industrialization to cope with the misery, destitution and poverty that had outstripped the capacities of charity funds, the idea of organizing self-help societies was let upon. What is overlooked is that in isolation, cooperation is a weak weapon to counter the poverty and exploitation inherent in the process of capitalism. It must be asserted

that in an essentially capitalistic economy, cooperative societies are at best "cooperative" only in particular respects (vis-a-vis their members) and competitive in all others. These roles conflict in the context of promoting the social interest. It is only when the endeavour is supported by appropriate institutional arrangements and the interests of the producers consumers are harmonised, that the conflict would disappear.*

Again, the conditions necessary for maximization of profit are the same as those of any other business enterprise. Under conditions of a socialist structure, however, Lange and Nyers show how although no cooperative can be regarded as socialist in itself, it embodies within it community aspirations as opposed to that of individuals or capitalists seeking profit. It is the task of socialist reconstruction that enables cooperatives to become representative of community interests. By this we see that cooperatives which run counter to the existing socio-economic reality are overwhelmed or absorbed. They, in fact, adjust to this reality and, in fact, frequently perpetuate old inequalities or create new ones.**

*Chinchankar & Namjoshi, Cooperation and the Dynamics of Change, p.29.

** U.N. Research Institute for Social Development Review of ... and Current Studies conducted (Geneva) 1970.

PEOPLE are a poem
A mystery and a song
which must be learnt again
and again
which must be learnt slowly
with care, with reverence
with wonder, with love
Learnt endlessly and joyously
People are like this

— MARGARET HATHAWAY

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZING PEOPLE FOR POWER

A departure from these essentially harmonistic strategies to development manifests itself in the standpoint of a third basic approach to change. These groups have ventured forth in search of more radical alternatives to existing structures. Their overall effort has been to start with the people - to treat people as subjects rather than objects of development processes. Their attempt has been to evolve new units of rural action that are people-oriented rather than produce-oriented.

The relief and growth-oriented approaches to development, they are felt, are the histories of goodwill translated into action, which assume that it is possible to bring about change in the existing system. This group regards this as unrealistic. They point out that these programmes have benefited only the better off and that the inevitable result has been a growing disparity and inequality. They emphasise that the existing unevenness of the distribution of resources cannot be ignored and that the channelizing of resources from the top will only strengthen the top leading to a widening of the gap and an increase in poverty.

They believe that illiteracy, hunger, ignorance, cultural backwardness - poverty itself is only symptoms of a malaise that is inherent in the existing system. Attempts at reforming the system will not go far in remedying the situation; a healthy functioning of this fundamentally unhealthy system is only an eyewash. If the root of the problem has to be removed and the cause tackled effectively, then the structures in which it is incumbent must be demolished, the value orientations created and perpetuated by it must be changed and for this people must be organized.

The group does not see the community as being one where all sections share a common interest. It sees it rather in terms

of the antagonistic relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, the owners of the means of production, and those who are forced by this system of private ownership, to sell their labour power. Private ownership and the concomitant principles of individualism and competition that are the foundation on which society is based, tend by their very nature towards the concentration of power (economic, social and political) in the hands of a few. This inevitably affects every aspect of human existence. The exploited are deprived not merely of their surplus labour (which is appropriated by the owners of the means of production) but of the very dignity of human existence. "Development, they assert, is the process of change by which the exploited, while seeking their own liberation from this oppressive system, transform their structures of production, establish new relationships, set up appropriate political and administrative institutions for themselves, redefine their own culture in order to achieve a better, more just existence."

The process of organization must enable the oppressed to become conscious of their situation of exploitation, analyse its causes and see its multifarious manifestations. It must enable them to see how the inhuman degradation every imposed upon them by an unjust system permeates every aspect of their lives. Conflict in society exists albeit in a latent form. Organization brings it to the surface so that it can be resolved, unmask the reality of oppression by bringing the poor face to face with their oppressor. It is the only means by which people can collectively discover their power, power which is not a machiavellian word of evil intent but the means by which the people can find redress for their grievances and act against conditions that oppress them. As the guidelines of TANU put it "Any action that gives people more control over their own affairs is an action for development, even if it

does not offer them more bread. Any action that reduces their say in determining their own affairs or running their own lives is not development and retards them even if the action brings a little more bread". Organization, all these groups agree, must enable the people to struggle collectively throw off the pall of centuries of economic, social and cultural degradation which has submerged them in a culture of silence. Organization and real education must enable the exploited to get -what is their right as human beings - control over the product of their labour, a voice and participation in decision-making, equality and dignity. Although all 4 groups cited here agree on these fundamental assumptions of this approach, their experiences in terms of concrete implementation differ widely. The first group focusses attention on the organization of village associations of the poor or Sanghams. Although it does lay emphasis on social education and consciousness raising, the activities that the sanghams undertake are primarily economic in nature and in some cases, this economic help is rendered to individual beneficiaries - something that stands in opposition to the fundamental assumption of collective functioning. This group and the second one are primarily caste-based organisations of Harijans. Although they agree at the theoretical level that the basis of people's organization is the class solidarity of the exploited, in their own sphere of working they have been unable to overcome barriers posed by the social reality in the Indian context. The third group is also involved with the organization of a fundamentally homogeneous section of society - the Adivasis. At the micro level, these groups may succeed in organizing and mobilizing certain oppressed sections of the population but if this process is to acquire significance at the macro level, definite linkages with other oppressed sections will have to emerge in keeping with another fundamental assumption of this approach viz., that it is this capitalistic system of private ownership that lies at the root of exploitation and poverty which will have to be reconstructed. The fourth group is involved in the process of

spreading science education. Although the activities of this group are not directly concerned with the creation of mass organizations, they presuppose the existence of, operate through or contribute to the creation of mass organizations that direct efforts at the kind of change envisaged in this approach. One of the fundamental premises that this approach is based on, is the need to begin with a scientific analysis of society in its historical perspective which reveals that definite laws operate in the process of social development — what otherwise looks like a series of haphazard accidents. The activities of this group are geared to an inculcation of this scientific spirit — which is inextricably linked with any aspect of social education and consciousness raising.

Economic Inputs with a Difference.—The foregoing analysis and studies reveal, at least in part, the failure of the cooperative endeavour to fulfil its objectives and meet the challenge of poverty and inequality. This case study of a group working in 'N' district of Andhra Pradesh, presents us with an example of an attempt to reconcile the problems posed by poverty, inadequate development of resources and technology on the one hand and inequality and social disparity on the other.

Socio-Economic Background.—The group works in one of the seven taluks of 'N' district. The taluk has an area of 1591.3 sq. miles (4.2 sq. miles is urban) with a population of 243,724. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes constitute 8.3 per cent of the population.* The climate in the area is hot and dry. Average rainfall is 30 inches. There are no big forests. Two rivers flow through the taluk but the main sources of irrigation are wells and tanks. There are 138 primary schools, 19 middle schools, 14 higher secondary schools. 17 per cent of the people are literate. (26 per cent literacy among men and 7 per cent among women). 105 of the villages are electrified, 68 served by post offices and 41 connected by public roads.

* Figures according to the 1971 census.

Among the rural population, 51 per cent are non-workers and 49 per cent workers. Among the workers, 69 per cent work in the agricultural sector (35 per cent cultivators and 34 per cent agricultural labourers.). The other important occupations are livestock, forestry and fishing (6.4 per cent), household industry 10 per cent, manufacturing 3 per cent, trade and commerce (4 per cent), transport, storage and communication (3 per cent), other services (6 per cent).

It is important to note that in most of the villages about 95 per cent of the population own land and the 5 per cent who do not, are not necessarily the poorest. Each one of the service communities (dhobi, carpenter, Harijan, etc.) was given land (service inams) by the jagirdars. The problem was that these beneficiaries were fully occupied in the service of their masters and so had neither the time nor the resources to cultivate their lands. The land was left fallow and used by the villagers for grazing.

The total area sown was 40 per cent in this taluk as opposed to 49 per cent in the district. In any case, this land was not fertile. In subsequent years surplus land has been distributed under the Land Ceiling Act to the backward communities but this spill over benefit also has only come in the form of land which is hardly cultivable. As a result, most of the weaker sections work as permanent or daily wage-labourers for big landholders. An additional reason why the poor are unable to cultivate their land is that they do not own any bullocks. Owing to late cultivation and the lack of follow-up work, the crop almost invariably fails or at best the produce is low. Petty landowners thus prefer to have their land vacant because inputs generally amount to more than the output.

Most of the land is red soil and not very fertile. Irrigation facilities are poor, leaving 90 per cent of the land unirrigated. Most of the wells which belong to the poor are situated at the end of the tanks. Although the poor derive

no benefit from the tanks, they are forced to pay water-tax. Those who do not possess additional irrigation facilities may be compelled to go for late sowing. Their crop is bound to die because the water that flows from the tail end of the tanks is high in its saline and alkaline content. Those farmers who have wells tend to over-estimate the water resources at their disposal and cultivate a greater area than their well can sustain. They also tend to grow rice which needs flood irrigation even during summer. The poor farmers tend to make themselves unworthy of bank credit by digging technically objectionable wells near those of the rich, or in the river-bed or on land which has no clear title. Their plough drawn bullocks can only irrigate very marginal areas. Despite steps taken to increase fertilizer supplies, the quantities available are very insufficient.

The daily wages vary from village to village between Rs. 3 and Rs. 5 for men and Rs. 1.50 and Rs. 3.00 for women. The Jostam (monthly wages) still exists, giving scope for money-lending by landlords where interest amounts to 12 per cent and labour is bonded until loans are cleared. The attached labourers are paid 1 quintal of paddy per month (the same as was in 1947).

Attached labourers are taken on for a year or two years. The labourers take a loan from the landlord. Small farmers lend up to Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 and large farmers up to Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 1,500. The first Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 is interest-free, and for the remaining amount, interest is charged at 12 per cent per annum.

Attached labourers are not bonded. They have the freedom of moving over to another landlord, on paying back loans. There are attached labourers even among those who own lands. It is taking loans that leads to attached labour in most cases.

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The unstable and/organized agricultural labourers are

very dependent on the landlord as the labour market is confined to the agricultural season and the number of labourers available is far too great to be completely absorbed by the method of cropping and mode of production practised by the landlords.

The buffer stocks of grain that remain unsold are a clear indication of the lack of purchasing power among the needy. A major portion of the land is held by the Reddys although the size of their total holdings varies from village to village. In some places, there are large groups of North Indians (Rajputs) who were settled here 80 years ago by the Nizam's government in return for military services rendered. These Rajputs were given sizable landholdings, some of which they continue to own. In one village, 8 Rajputs own 400 out of 2,230 acres of land. More important, most of this land is irrigated by the village tank. In most of the areas the Rajputs are in the process of disposing of the land. The Komits (Vaishyas) also wield a great deal of power. They have sizeable landholdings and are well entrenched moneylenders not just in their own villages but in surrounding villages as well. Thus, it is these castes in degrees varying from village to village depending on their numeral and landholding dominance who control the economy and thereby the social life of the entire area.

Generally, the traditional service castes (Dhobis, Petters, Barbers) mix freely with the Harijans. This is not surprising because their role in village life, like that of the Harijans is to provide services at marriages etc. They too have Inam lands, held in dependent tenure at the pleasure of the landlord and depend almost completely on coolie wages. The type of production has changed since the establishment of the Vazir Sultan Tobacco Factory and the Nizam Sugar Factory at Hyderabad. As a result of the need to produce on a mass scale to fulfil factory demands, modernization of agricultural practices became a necessity. The people's land has begun to be used for the earnings of foreign exchange and not to meet their consumption requirements. Viability in agricultural production became the

the keynote and food production became secondary. Cash crops have taken the place of cereals and other foodgrains. The producers have become debtors and their destiny is now controlled by exports. They are at the mercy of the wider market economy. Mechanisation has adversely affected the labourers' lives, and factory-oriented production has led to the perpetuation of poverty and inequality.

Philosophy and Strategy.--Three fundamental principles under lie the activities of this group. The first is the belief that a village is not a community where the whole population shares common interests. The second is that development efforts should be such that they put the beneficiaries on the path of self-development. This requires an appropriate change in their value orientation. Thirdly it is believed that it is the dependency of the weak upon the rich that has resulted in their exploitation and consequent degradation. Based on these beliefs the strategy of the group has been to organize development efforts addressed to the poorest section of the village. It is believed that economic programmes will reduce their dependence, and participation in educational programmes will bring about appropriate changes in value orientation.

The overall strategy is to enable the weak to identify the causes and solutions of their problems which is not one of economic deprivation and exploitation alone but one where even the desire to free themselves is absent.

Activities.--The first step in organization is for the workers of the group to visit a village where it has been decided to take up development activities and identify the target group. The general strategy has been to identify a homogenous group (which in this context has been the Harijans, a majority of whom are agricultural labourers). Informal discussions about the village and its problems are initiated and a consciousness for the need for unity and organization is created. "Once the idea of organization is sold to the target group, they are called for a meeting and a formal structure is

given to the organization by electing a president, secretary and committee, holding regular meetings, maintaining accounts etc. The preliminary meetings are envisaged as providing an opportunity to gain confidence through dialogue, discussion, plan meetings and help people begin to manage their own affairs. Usually the office-bearers are elected on merit from among those who are articulate and energetic. But other considerations of traditional leadership criteria also play a part. The important thing is that the president should have the time to spend on the activities of the Sangam.

The village association expected to work for the economic and social upliftment of its members and also to act as a bridge between the voluntary group and the members. The association receives requests from its members for financial assistance. The applications are recommended on a priority basis, or selected by the association itself. Conflicting interests however continuously assert themselves. The Sangams are also responsible for the collection of loans and it has been found that community pressure is a very effective instrument in getting repayments. Sangams have also been involved in issues ranging from getting correct sugar rations from authorities, electrification of Harijanwadās, challenging of wrongful allocation of pattas on perambuke lands, allocation of surplus lands, etc. The Sangams have taken up contract work from the government for repairing a tank and laying a new approach road. They have also undertaken the construction of roads, drinking water wells, etc. Other activities of the Sangam include the setting up of a kirana shop, taking land on lease and undertaking community cultivation. Funds generated by the associations vary from between Rs. 30 and Rs. 3,000. Money is collected through the monthly payment of association membership fees, contributions made to chit funds run by the association and taxes charged on certain development works undertaken by the voluntary group. This concept of taxing programmes that have been implemented is yet to be routinized.

Education.--All other activities are extensions of Sangham functioning. The Sanghams play an active role in conducting the night school classes, organizing the cultural programmes etc. The selection of teachers is done by association members. The group believes that education is the only effective and permanent way to change attitudes submerged in the culture of silence with its attendant lethargy, conservatism and fatalism, is through education. Values and behaviour are closely related to cognitive structures - the way people see and grasp the physical and social world around. Education must facilitate a critical self-discovery of the way in which they are subjected and degraded. This pre-condition for social change which can only be arrived at by non-manipulative education through a common search dialogue.

Broadly the programme explores -

- (1) aspects of social education which include principles of democracy
- (2) functional literacy and extension education.

The subjects taught are of topical interest and touch upon issues like land, corruption, bribery, elections, untouchability, use and safe handling of electricity, etc. Talks are conducted by Patwaris and other village officials. Literacy is both a by-product of this process and an end in itself. The words chosen for literacy teaching are problem-oriented theme words around which discussion is stimulated. After a little drilling, the word is written and this creates a new feeling of discovery. 'Velugu', a fortnightly magazine published by the group is another important channel of communication and awareness building.

The teachers do not have any formal training; so fortnightly meetings are conducted at the group headquarter. A small library provides teachers with reading material. Entertainment programmes are considered an important channel for communicating ideas for they evoke maximum participation from the community. Playlets, songs, burra kathas, roleplay and group dancing have all been tried. The workers have prepared

special plays that have a definite social bearing. These plays are well rehearsed and elaborate preparations are made for the programmes. This is the responsibility of the Sanghams. The staging of each play involves a minimum expenditure of Rs.150/- for stage, make-up etc.

The workers find that a weak spot in the educational programme is the lack of motivation on the part of the target group. This is sought to be overcome by linking the achievements made in the adult education classes with economic programmes. One criterion for extending material benefits (milk animals, plough bullocks etc.) is participation in the education programme. Personal appeals made by literate leaders and the "affectionate request" of a village elder are found to go a long way in making people attend classes.

Women's associations.--Special associations of women are formed:

- (1) to provide them a change from their daily routine and give them an opportunity to come together and discuss their personal, family and community problems
- (2) attract them to the adult education programme
- (3) encourage saving through chit funds
- (4) tell them about nutrition
- (5) impart skills of basket weaving, sewing etc.

Of the nine associations formed thus far, nine run chit funds, four run basket-weaving programmes and three conduct stitching classes. Kitchen-gardening is undertaken by all the associations. Three basic health workers have been appointed.

Economic Programmes.--The main thrust of this group's activities are the economic programmes which include:

- (1) agricultural development and extension programmes,
- (2) animal husbandry
- (3) cottage industries.

These programmes aim at providing supportive structures that reduce dependence on landlords and creating attitudes of self-help

for, it is believed that the problem of poverty can be tackled by introducing a new socio-economic order with a new land man ratio. Here priority is given to -

- (1) Introduction of irrigation, fertilizers and pesticides
- (2) The production of staple foods as opposed to cash crops
- (3) Introduction of labour intensive cultivation
- (4) Dry farming practice and the use of drought-resistant seeds.

Land development.--Most of the backward and scheduled caste beneficiaries of the group have small land holdings which are poor in quality. Even though they own some land, it does not provide them with a source of livelihood, making it necessary for them to work for others. This in turn prevents them from cultivating their land in time. It was found that this vicious cycle can be broken if bullocks are given to members of the weaker sections so that they can cultivate their land in time, lease in land from others, and make supplementary earnings by renting out their bullocks for ploughing, pulling of carts, etc. 123 pairs of plough bullocks have so far been supplied by the group.

Irrigation.--The need for irrigation in a dry area like this one is obvious. But the cost of digging wells and filter tubewells are very heavy. The digging of irrigation wells are undertaken by the beneficiaries themselves, for which they are paid 60 per cent of their wage. As the wages reach the beneficiaries themselves, their purchasing capacity is increased at the execution stage of the project itself. Cultivation efforts are started as soon as the first water is struck. So far 90 per cent of the open wells and all the filter tubewells dug under auspices of this group's activities have proved to be successful.

Even though the irrigation programme as a whole has been effective in improving agricultural production of the poor, it is not without problems, some of which are:

- (1) Farmers often over-estimate the water yield of the well and cultivate more area than the well can sustain. Very often, the tail-end crop fails.
- (2) They go for the rice crop which needs flood irrigation even during summer.
- (3) Many farmers dig wells near existing ones. This makes them unworthy for bank credit.
- (4) Filter tubewells/largely situated in river-land and as there is no clear title, it is difficult to obtain local credit.
- (5) Oil engine is expensive for farmers who use them to lift water from their wells.

At the time of this study it was reported that 157 wells were in operation in the area covering an area of 644 acres of which 544 acres were not irrigated.

(c) Agricultural Extension Service

The extension staff educates the beneficiary farmers about various aspects of the use of fertilizers. The field staff emphasise the reduced use of fertilizers and the increased use of substitutes.

Farmers are generally taken together to a cooperative society for purchasing fertilizers. In the process, they are told the differences in rates prevailing in different shops, the cost factor in purchasing fertilizer from different shops, the advantages of buying fertilizers in bulk instead of in small quantities etc.

Farmers are also given training in pest control through insecticides. The cost-benefit of using insecticides is positive in Bhongir. No farmer can afford to take the risk of losing a crop at the last moment. If any pest or insect attacks the crop, the field staff of the group immediately demonstrates and explains to the farmers the causes and preventive and curative measures to be taken. Farmers are also trained in spraying and dusting and in the maintenance of the equipment. Use of good quality seed is the most

important element in obtaining high yields. Many poor farmers are not in a position to store seeds for the next crop, but obtain some seed from somebody else at the time of sowing. To avoid this, the group supplies high-yielding, drought and disease resistant seeds.

It is realised that the widespread use of fertilizers and chemical insecticides is making the farmers dependent upon outside agencies and market forces. It is also realised that certain farmers, particularly the poor ones, have difficulties in repaying the loans, limiting their further borrowing capacity. To overcome the latter, the group is taking a generous attitude by trying to help those in real distress.

In the areas where successful irrigation wells have been dug, land plotting, canal alignment, distributory systems, contour-bunding, the laying of pipes to take water to upland reaches, and measures for controlling soil erosion and water seepage have been undertaken. The group has undertaken some 'demonstration' activities also. But it believes that the current pattern of demonstration involving heavy input of fertilizers, water, technical knowhow etc., makes it very unrealistic for ordinary farmers to emulate. Though demonstration farms, the main attempt is to change the cropping pattern for economic use of water, fertilizer, cultivation of additional crops like vegetables during out of season period; and the cultivation of high-yielding varieties of different crops. The demonstrations are arranged in the farms of beneficiaries rather than in a specialized demonstration plot. Between December 1976 and December 1977, a sum of Rs.83,432 was spent by the group for loans for the purchase of fertilizers; Rs.4,582 on pesticides and Rs.13,578 on improved seeds. This money is used as a revolving fund for rotation to beneficiaries during different cropping seasons. The society has supplied pest control implements worth Rs.4,377 so far -- 430 farmers covering an area of 563 acres have been benefited from this.

4. Animal Husbandry:

Development of animal husbandry is another item of work actively undertaken. The objectives of this programme are:

- (1) To improve economic conditions by providing a supplementary source of income. This supportive economy does not permit the beneficiaries to relinquish their main occupation whether it be as agricultural labourer or part-time cultivator.
- (2) To improve the health of the agricultural labourers and their children by introducing some quantity of milk in their daily diet.
- (3) To make landless persons the owners of some sort of means of production and in that way to reduce their dependence on their employers.
- (4) To counteract the tendency that animal husbandry is completely non-viable for the marginal farmers and landless labourers.

The main activity under this programme is the supply of milch animals. Beneficiaries for the programme are selected by the association after considering their interest in the programme. Extension services and guidance are provided by the group. Fodder crops are also being developed in waste lands and the fodder requirement of each village is estimated. The collection of fodder is done during leisure time so that there is no disruption of normal work. The selection of the milch cattle is done by a team consisting of a member from the group, an expert from veterinary department, and a delegate from financing bank and the beneficiary. Precautionary measures like vaccination and insurance are immediately taken care of.

It was possible to supply 141 animals under the scheme till the end of February 1978. Among these, 24 got subsidy from the Small Farmers Development Agency. The loans are provided by the commercial banks at 4 per cent interest since the beneficiaries are selected from low income group.

The beneficiaries sell their milk in government milk

collection centres, for which payments are made every fortnight. Of this, 50 per cent is given to the beneficiary and the remaining 50 per cent is remitted towards his loan. Training facilities are provided to the farmers in the upkeep of the animals and veterinary services are provided whenever required.

Banks advance loans only to the upgraded milch cattle which cost not less than Rs.2,000/- each. The local variety can be acquired within Rs.1,000/- and at the same time, it is found economical compared to upgraded variety. Due to this restriction imposed by the banks, the price of upgraded animal is kept low to safeguard the interests of consumer, but neither the consumers nor the producers are benefited as the handling charges are exorbitant. The recommended feed by the experts seems to be very costly so that the beneficiaries are not able to spend on concentrates. Despite the decrease of milk production, the net returns are more in the traditional method of cattle rearing. However, the repayment of loan is delayed and the quality of animal deteriorates due to traditional methods.

In spite of all these drawbacks, this scheme has benefited the poor. About 90 per cent of the beneficiaries are free from the clutches of moneylenders. Health of the children also improved and the bargaining power of agricultural labourers also improved slightly. The impact of the programme can be witnessed in some of the villages. The expenditure towards running oil engine and payment of chit fund instalments are met.

Health Programme:

Improvement of health of the villagers is one of the objectives. Health programmes have been started in 11 villages. The villages were selected at the request of villagers and the cooperation of village association is sought in implementing the programme. The main aim of the programme is to provide

provide basic health service and health education service. A trained Health Worker in the village attends to minor ailments under the guidance of health team. Mobile health team consisting of doctor, nurse and a social worker in health visit the selected villages once in a week. The health workers are selected from the selected villages and most of them are night school teachers. They are trained for ten days in treating common ailments by the doctor and a test is conducted after the completion of the training. The selected candidates are equipped with medical kits. Basic Health Workers are required to:

- (1) look into the health education to the people in sanitation, hygiene, etc.
- (2) consult a doctor about serious cases.
- (3) contact and advise pregnant mothers. A mobile health team visits every village once a week.

Harijan Organization for Structural Changes

One of the outstanding features of 'M' Taluk in Tamil Nadu is the fact that whereas Harijans constitute 11 per cent of the Indian population, the Harijans in this area constitute almost 70 per cent of the total. These people, who are on the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy, are lowest in the class hierarchy as well, in spite of their large numbers. Caste and class oppression combined make their lives intolerable and miserable. The injustice and exploitation suffered by these Harijans is painfully obvious even at first glance.

Origin of the Associations

A group of Harijan graduates (who had been brought up in the rural areas and had experienced caste oppression themselves) saw the gravity of the situation and felt the need to dedicate themselves to the cause of liberating the oppressed. They chose to work in the villages of 'M' Taluk, after a

detailed survey which revealed its revolutionary potential. The large number of 'injustice facts' made explicit the oppressive structures that existed. The landholding pattern revealed that any delay in taking up cudgels for the oppressed in fighting would end in disaster. The situation still held hope. The people were frustrated and waiting for an opportunity to act. It was in this situation that the group entered the area.

Ideology and Objectives:

The group is committed to equality. Their work is people-oriented. They treat the people as subjects of humanization - not as objects of welfare and relief. They believe in a steady, slow and painful process of social change, which is effective and revolutionary; the infrastructure has to be radically transformed. Theirs is a vision of a classless society.

They have pledged that they will work in different areas where there are oppressed Harijans, seek no comforts, but accept the simple life of those with whom they are working. Being committed to a people's movement and not to the establishment, they have decided that they will only work in and through structures that are temporary and flexible guarding against the danger of institutionalization of their work. The specific objects towards achievement of which the group works are outlined by them as follows:

- Recognition of Harijans as integral part of society where they are accepted as people with dignity and respect.
- Building of Harijan power through "Mass Organizations" for effective participation in political, social and economic spheres at the local, block and district level.
- Consolidation of Harijan labour on economic issues based on day-to-day problems and increasing the solidarity and the bargaining power of those who are deprived of cultivation.

- Politicization and organisation of landless agricultural labourers other than Harijans and conscientising them to consolidate and participate in struggles which are of a class nature.
- Study and analysis that lead to the liberation of four categories of agricultural labourers namely, (i) landless labourers on daily wages (ii) landed labourers with small pieces of land who lack material resources, (iii) Permanent bonded labourers under the clutches of big landlords (iv) Semi-bonded contract labourers and share croppers.

Methodology:

Paulo Friere's approach to cultural revolution through conscientization and literacy for social change have influenced this group. They use some of his methods for literary teaching and creating an awareness of self-hood and responsibility among the Harijans.

Gandhiji's philosophy of education for the liberation of the masses has also been accepted as a source out of which their methodology had emerged. Purification of the self and total commitments to the cause of the public, refusing to comply with a system that perpetuates injustices, learning to suffer, struggling together to create a new community are the essence of Gandhiji's precepts which have been emphasised during the whole course of education and action. The peaceful methods of protest and the demanding of legitimate rights (Satyagraha - a protest for truth) are given prime importance. Saul Alinsky's techniques of organizing a disorganized community to build power has been used as a tactic to organize the powerless to build mass organizations. The techniques of role-play, analysing case studies, group dynamics, creating new leadership, pressurising the power structure through non-violent means have all been imbibed for problem solving and to build Harijan power.

The Process of Politicization:

When the group first began its activities, the Senior

Animators contacted the poorest Harijans in a number of villages in a particular area. Mass meetings were organized at the request of the villages to explain clearly the aims and objectives of the programme. Only after receiving a written petition from the majority of the villagers, the animators were sent to live in the village and carry out group activities.

Classes for children and adults were also entry points. The children were taught to sing meaningful songs and enact dramas depicting village problems such as low wages for labourers, harassment by landlords, drinking water problems etc. This always provoked interest and enthusiasm among the elders and they actively participated in discussing the problems.

Literacy classes:

These are aimed not merely at teaching the villagers how to read and write, but to enable people to become aware of their situation, and bring a certain clarity of perception. The Harijans are made to discover what is oppressing them, who is exploiting them and why they are unable to change their environment.

There is no pre-planned syllabus because that would be based on the observations and perceptions of an outsider. The techniques that each animator uses, develops an interaction and communication with the people. Observation of problems of the village and the words that are repeatedly used by the villagers are taken for provoking future discussion. These problem-oriented keywords form the content of the classes. This is decided upon for each village separately, for, no two villages have identical problems; so the question of standardization does not exist. In the evenings the animators sit together with the villagers and conduct games and small dramas related to the problem-oriented keyword for about 10 minutes.

This provokes discussion and creates interest in the theme of the drama. When people see that their day-to-day problems are being enacted, they are able to identify with the actors. Everyone participates because the problem is theirs. It is discussed by the whole group. The animators ask the people a number of questions, and listen carefully because this provides the basis for gathering the information upon which later discussion could be based.

The relationship between the landed and the landless and land is made explicit through discussion — "Why is it that a few have so much when the majority has nothing? Who is the biggest landlord in the area? Why does he have the land? How did he get it? Who is working on it? Who is reaping the benefit? All these questions become relevant not merely at an abstract level but at the concrete level of the people's day-to-day functioning. The people begin to realise that their existence is not predetermined. Their situation then can be linked up to the life of a factory worker. They too can demand better wages. Harijans need not remain silent in the face of injustice. The next step is decodification* with the use of pictures. The diagram that a Harijan makes of land projects the real problem showing land as he/she sees it. The animator has a picture of an affluent farm, but the Harijan's picture is bound to be different. The process of codification** and decodification cannot but culminate in a heated discussion. It is also necessary for the animator to discuss the fact that no immediate action can be taken to change the situation. It is necessary to realise how wealthy and powerful the other side is.

Cultural Actions

A special feature of the programme is cultural action

* Decodification is used to indicate the process on which an abstract concept is broken up and analysed in terms of its concrete elements.

** Codification is the reformulation of those concrete component elements but now with a critical consciousness of its different dimensions.

or problem-oriented drama. Recreation which is an important aspect of life, is used meaningfully to reach out to the people, to convey to them their own problems and to that aspect of the educational process, by facilitating the objective analysis of reality. The content of the drama is introduced to the community in three phases. In the first, problem situations are enacted and people are reminded that these cannot be ignored. Emphasis is laid on the importance of helping those who are suffering and the need for assistance.

In the second phase, situations are portrayed wherein individuals or groups appear on the stage trying to approach government officials about issues like the procurement of loans, ration cards, land pattas etc. The concept of community solidarity and consciousness of human rights is thus introduced. In the third stage, there is criticism of key individuals, and mobilising public opinion. People are prepared to demonstrate against injustice. This direct criticism can come only at the end of a year, may be longer, by a process of constant interaction. The fourth stage of drama comes in the form of portraying open conflict and struggle by various means — mass protest, hunger strike, gherao etc. This is the last stage of political drama which should culminate in action. Relating everyday life and problems to what is being enacted facilitates spontaneous response. The highly emotional quality of the response that follows makes immediate action inevitable. The dramas are conducted in the middle of the village with few theatrical establishments. They last for two to three hours and the village youth is encouraged to take part, the animators often join in. The emphasis is not on the perfection of histrionic skills. Cultural action is a part of the educational process, the actors and the audience is in constant interaction, taking part in a process of understanding, analysing and reacting to the actuality of the situation that is being enacted.

Training:

Systematic training at various levels is undertaken to prepare the people to consciously initiate and participate in struggles to establish their rights. Twice or three times a year, the group holds planning meetings for a couple of days with all the animators. The topics to be dealt with in training programmes are chalked out. The topics include:

- (i) Analysis of political parties
- (ii) Analysis of Indian System and structures - Political Economy
- (iii) Multinationals
- (iv) A study of Educational System in India
- (v) Political parties - how they operate
- (vi) Our vision of a new society within the context of people's movement.

Training for village animators is through weekly meetings of animators in each area, apart from which there are inter-area training programmes once a month. Training for youth and village leadership meetings are conducted area-wise, twice a month by each village animator. Apart from the ideological issues which the village animators discuss every week, the practical dimensions of the work are also dealt with (legal procedures and legislations, and the functions of different government departments.). The rate of exploitation is laid bare by analysing the investment per acre, the output and the amount paid to the labourers as wages. They have been exposed to different political ideologies, methods and procedures of party formation and contesting election. They discuss what the New Society that they envisage would be like, and how they would succeed in establishing it through struggles.

Training for women through the sewing centre:

A sewing Centre for women in a small Harijan village serves as a training centre for conscientising young women. These young women were unmarried, had passed their school final, and were unemployed. They resented agricultural work and were frustrated. As an experiment, three girls were given regular

training in problem-oriented education for changing women's attitude towards society, family, sex, men etc. Out of the 40 hours a week, 20 were spent on education through leadership training, cultural action, informal discussion etc. The rest on learning embroidery, tailoring and dress making. This training programme became very popular and today the centre has seventy-five women together, where they make embroidered garments and are also conscientised. The making of embroidered garments is a means to get the women together as a group, and it also helps raise money towards the stipend of the girls and maintenance of the centre. The training centre does not aim at making profit by selling embroidered garments. It seeks to train them to realise their rights and responsibilities, be liberated from feelings of inferiority, ignorance and superstition and become liberated young women who will fight for change.

From awareness building to organization

It is a big step forward from awareness building to organization. Organizing in rural areas is slow work. People have to not only perceive the need for change, but also to realise that it is within their capacity to work towards it. It needs systematic analysis, groundwork in developing local initiative. Only then will organized joint force emerge. In every village, an Action Committee is constituted with the primary aim of taking action to solve the problems discussed in the literacy classes. This is an informal committee comprising of both young and old, and sometimes women, and its members are selected by the villagers themselves. The Action Committee members of each village meet soon after the literacy classes and cultural action which are essentially mass meetings. Representatives of the village action committee constitute the inter-village action committee, which meets once a month. A top committee meets fortnightly. The meetings are meant not only to discuss concrete problems but also for ideological

orientation as mentioned in the 'Training'. In case of an emergency where the neighbouring villages have to take a stand on an issue jointly, an emergency meeting is called. Processions to the Taluk Office to demand justice, picketing at a cross road to win public sympathy, hunger strikes to pressurise the bureaucracy for establishing law and order are some of the activities which the Action Committees have initiated.

The Mass Organisations

Three years of training and confrontation through Action Committees led in January 1977 to the formation of a mass organization of Harijans with an initial membership of three thousand Harijans from sixty-five villages. Some of the main objectives of the organization according to the manifesto are:

- (i) to ensure that agricultural labourers are paid the minimum wages stipulated
- (ii) to protect the basic rights of Harijans, and procure benefits due to them from the Government by democratic means
- (iii) to ensure that agricultural labourers are paid the minimum wages stipulated
- (iv) to form women's association in villages as a first step towards their development
- (v) to form agricultural cooperatives.

The organization is secular, and has no party alignment. There is a general committee of 21 members out of which is chosen an Executive Committee of 6 members. The organization now has members from nearly 120 villages. In most of the villages there are branches of the organization. These branches conduct study circles for youth and discuss the village's problem which are later conveyed to the committee for deciding on the action to be taken. Many local quarrels have been tackled and solved, and justice sought for many an atrocity on the Harijans who had hitherto never been heard by a local bureaucrats. Major struggles have also taken place; to quote a few, in one village a Harijan was beaten with slippers by a caste Hindu for drinking water from the case side of the village. Through the organisation

a police complaint was lodged and the offenders taken into custody; but even more important is the fact that 3,000 Harijans assembled to register their protest against the atrocity.

Early this year, there was a strike by agricultural labourers demanding a wage rise. The strike lasted for four days and was supported not only by Harijans but by all agricultural labourers, taking the movement a step forward towards class struggle. The strength of the organization lies in the continuous process of study - action and reflection that takes place. The Executive Committee has regular training seasons with the aim of working out a clear-cut ideology in the mind of the leaders so that there is no backsliding, and also to plan further programmes to conscientise villagers.

Office-bearers are helped to learn the techniques of petition-writing and submitting, etc. Moreover, two mass meetings a week are conducted by the Executive members for publishing the aspect of problem-solving. There have been at least 100 meetings in the villages of this taluk in the past two years.

In the forthcoming Panchayat elections, the Harijan leaders intend contesting for the Panchayat Presidency. This is to ensure that the benefits rightfully due to Harijans reach them through the Panchayat and do not get channelised elsewhere due to caste prejudices. The organization has however been consciously striving to keep away from party politics. When the Lok Sabha elections were held in 1977, the organization which had nearly five thousand votes was approached by several political parties. The Committee drew out a charter of 42 demands, and laid down the conditions that these be met if the five thousand votes were to be cast in their favour. None of the parties fulfilled them and the members voted according to ~~hat~~ their will.

Along with these political action programmes, the organization plans to have some minimal economic activities which

are aimed towards the growth of a self-sustained and dignified human community. Steps are being taken to play the role of a labour cooperative that takes contracts on behalf of its members instead of allowing individuals to fall a prey to the exploitation of middlemen. A contract has been already taken for stone-quarrying. Apart from this, poramboke land, pattas etc. are also secured from the government to ensure some economic security for the people.

As regards the participation of women, though there are women members in the Executive Committee, women do not participate in the village study circles or meetings actively. However, their role in struggles have been vital, and in some cases, the success of the struggles is due to the sustaining capacity of the women.

The organization runs entirely on the subscription paid by its members - which is 50 paise per month, and Re.1 for enrolment. The executive committee members are paid Rs.100/- for conveyance every month, but besides that, all work is voluntary.

Though the organization began exclusively for the Harijan poor, today the weaker sections of other castes are also trying for membership, and the organization is taking its first step towards broadening out into a class-based organization of the oppressed agricultural labourers.

New Movement in New Areas:

In keeping with their conviction that they have to move out into different areas where people are oppressed, the members of the core group have extended their activities to different areas with each main animator being mainly responsible for activities in one particular area. Though action is decentralised, they meet very often and discuss practical and ideological issues. There are some variations in the approach adopted in the new areas, though the process is essentially the same. In two of the new taluks entered into, Harijans

constitute only 31 per cent and 18 per cent of the population respectively, and the thrust is towards organization of the exploited of all castes, from the beginning. Accordingly, an "Agricultural Labourers Movement" has been formed with branch associations in villages. They are supported by the poor of other castes as well in this venture. For instance, in one of the villages, when some rich caste Hindus tried to obstruct the construction of a hut for the association, poorer members of one upper caste went out of their way to be helpful and donated two palm trees for the construction. This resulted in a conflict between two sections of the same caste. The richer section filed a false case against the poorer members. This has brought them closer to the association and the poor Harijans.

In one of the areas, a new women's training Centre has been set up, and one of the main animators has undertaken the organization of women exclusively. Sufficient attention must be given to leadership training and education of women because women are doubly oppressed and, need much more time and attention. Therefore, a new plan has been drafted and is being put into action, according to which -

- (a) Women will be trained in tailoring and other income generating crafts, 'animation' being an essential part of the training given
- (b) Training women village health workers who will also serve as health educators for women in the village.
- (c) Literacy classes and conscientization programmes will be conducted exclusively for women and their problems.

These programmes, it is hoped, will generate women's leadership and ensure their conscious and active participation in the struggle for social change, not only as supporters but as active decision-makers.

Other Activities:

Non-formal education for Harijan children.--In the areas where the group is working, there are thousands of children between 5 - 15 years, who have never been to school or have dropped out very early. The group felt the need to start schools for the education of these children, recognizing that unless the children are also educated along with their parents, social transformation of the Harijan population is not possible. These schools are not merely substitutes for formal schools but are radically different from them. The content and methods are carefully planned, aiming at making them articulate, creative and confident. Education here serves as a tool to reflection, imagination and creative thinking.

Courses far in Conscientization for other groups.--In compliance with requests from various groups and organizations, the core group runs courses in conscientization. There have already been eight such courses for different groups within the last eighteen months. The training is on both the theoretical and practical aspects of mobilizing for social, economic and political change. Lectures, discussions, field visits, demonstrations of various methodologies, introduction of different ideologies, case studies etc. are some of the most distinct features of the training courses.

Future perspectives.--The movement now extends over some of the taluks of two adjacent districts. The group envisages that it would soon spread to over the entire state with an centralized leadership. They see the need to have linkages with unions of industrial workers, so that they would together become a massive force supporting each other's struggles. The group now considers that affiliation to a left party is necessary if they have to make an impact at the national level, but they feel that the left parties are unwilling to respond.

Science Education for Change

Science for the people.--Science and science teaching

today finds itself placed far away from people; the benefits of science and technology are channelled to the exclusive advantage of certain privileged sections of society, and scientists and technologists are pre-occupied with solutions to problems which have almost nothing to do with the life and death problems of the majority of the people. In our country, like in many others, the ends of science education and research have become the acquisition of degrees, jobs, money, status etc. Such a state of affairs should not cause any surprise in a society like ours, given its social and economic structure and the corresponding value system. Any meaningful attempt to relate the realms of science and technology to the solution of social and economic problems will, therefore, be also an attempt to strengthen the people's struggle to liberate themselves from the clutches of social and economic oppression. So long as opportunities for the acquisition of scientific knowledge are kept out of reach for the majority of the people, the struggle to change the existing iniquitous social system will only be further weakened. Attempts of a revolutionary nature to envisage the problem of mobilisation and participation of the people for their own development as distinguished from the kind of "development" handed out to them have been going on in recent years in different parts of the country, but all of them in relative isolation from one another, one of the most interesting innovative and broad-based experiments in mobilisation is that of the group in Kerala.

Origin and Ideology.--A group of socially conscious writers came together in the mid-60s to form a writers' forum. They felt that it was necessary to attempt to fill the lacuna that exists in the publication of Malayalam literature for the masses. The publishing industry is geared to commercial production and focusses its attention on bringing out fast-moving, light literature. Being committed to the society and people on the one hand and the development of the approach on the other, this group of intellectuals were also acutely conscious of the fact that science today is locked in ivory tower. It cannot remain there

if it is to develop into something worthwhile and meaningful for the larger sections of the society.

Scientific thinking has a big role to play in society, for, no change can take place unless the people begin to think rationally and scientifically. The group as a whole believes that science education will succeed in raising the level of consciousness of the people in making them 'thinking people'. Using this understanding as a foundation, the group decided that not only must existing scientific literature be carried to the people through mass organizations and primary level contact but out of this interaction a new science must emerge, science of and for the people, one that is relevant to their lives in the existing situations and circumstances. The group also feels that it is necessary to fight the myth that the rural masses are irrational, unwilling to learn and incapable of changing their situation. The problem is that those who are the 'owners of science' are not competent enough to go down to the common man. They speak a language that is foreign and the subject is steeped in esoteric jargon. The members are clear that although at the present moment they are merely concerned with getting the intellectuals to be involved in the process of using a very important resource that is available and that must be channelised, their long-term aim is that the system be changed. As a result of this exposure, some intellectuals who had never had the time before, are today committed workers. Ultimately, middle class intellectuals will have to decide as individuals on whose side they are. The group cannot decide that for them; it can only set a process in motion.

At the level of the people the group feels it can bring to them the facts; it can reveal to them the potential that science has, and that the wealth that exists in the country. By infusing the scientific approach and equipping the people with the tools of analysis, it can help the people to see that the existing social structure is the main obstacle in the proper

utilisation of resources and a more equitable distribution. Beyond this it cannot go. It is to the members of the group and the people as individuals and as a group outside the structure of the organisation that can give this awareness concrete form and mould it into a movement. The formal organization as it exists can only take note of the potential that exists in the people and help them initiate a process of change.

Science education can only give the impetus for change. It is necessary to help people plan, but that is where the work of the urban middle class ends. In themselves, they cannot form a pressure group; that is for the people to do. They can only set people thinking. But as it stands, the time is not ripe to take sides. The special feature of the state were the left parties until recently undertook the responsibility of politicisation has been useful as groundwork making it possible for this group now to concentrate on science alone. The group believes in extensive rather than intensive work. Since their ultimate objective is that change should take place in society as a whole, it is important to reach out to as many people as possible in order to mobilise public opinion. Science cannot be restricted to any one particular class. But the issues that are dealt with and the literature published should be such that they relate to the problems of the majority rather than to the concerns of a few. One of the members said, "When we propagate science, it does not matter to which ideology we prescribe. We try to find a common platform from which scientific knowledge aimed at bringing about scientific thinking and attitudes can be conveyed. Although the initial response was discouraging, in 1967 an organization was formed and a constitution formulated specifying that the group aims to:

- (a) popularise science
- (b) create a scientific attitude among the masses
- (c) equip Malayalam (the state language) for scientific use.

The activities of the group have grown much beyond the scope of

the objective set. The group unanimously felt that at this point there was need to reflect more deeply on the ideological stand of their activities. Today, their work supplements that of the existing educational programmes but ultimately they see it as being part of a necessary and radical change in the entire educational system.

Organizational structure.--The organization started initially with a group of seven which consisted primarily of scientists and journalists. Today the membership has grown to over 3,000 and in addition to this, there are many non-members who participate in the activities which have been extended mainly through the establishment of personal contacts. Science forums for village youth occupy an important place in the group's activities. The members from these clubs constitute nearly 50 per cent of the total membership. The annual membership which was originally Rs. 100 was reduced to Rs. 5 because of numerous requests from members. Five hundred to six hundred science societies are run. But this in itself is no indication of the full impact that the movement had.

In order to remain a truly voluntary organization, the group has tried to keep the work of its members primarily part-time. They are however being forced to change this policy or at least make sufficient allowance for exceptions. The organization publishes a science journal regularly and this makes it difficult to rely completely on a part-time staff.

Ten members of the organization constitute one administrative unit. For every ten members one General Council member is elected. All the council members together form a district committee. The Central Organization is a formal body with a constitution and Executive Committee. But this is not the focal point which dictates the nature of the activities to be taken up - that is done by the District Committee. It is at this level that various specialised units such as Environmental Brigade (which has experts in ecological problems), Publication Brigade,

Communication Brigade and Educational Brigade have been formulated. These experts help the members in a purely advisory capacity. In order to orient members, camps are held during which an initial document is prepared after discussions among the top members and academicians. Then from each district two or three members are invited to the camp and the whole document is discussed. Only after an adequate discussion are amendments made in the document which is then used for the further education of the masses.

Activities and Methods of Operations

A. Science Forums: The group started its activities in the village by establishing science forums for high school students and although its activities now are far more broadbased, the science forums continue to play an important role in their science education programme. In most villages the contact point for these science forums is the village library (established by the Grantha Shala Samithi) and the contact person is the village teacher. The teachers are involved for two reasons. First, traditionally the teachers have been easily accepted in villages and are respected by all. Second, they have direct contact with the students.

Initially some of the members of the group went into the villages, identified enthusiastic youth, spoke to them and tried to build up their confidence. The activities and discussions emerged out of the people's day-to-day problems. Health, which is a seemingly neutral subject was one of the first issues which invariably brought people together in all the villages. It has been the group's policy, however, not to dwell on controversial issues in isolation. During the initial stages of the programme, the group used exhibitions and lectures extensively as a means of reaching out to the people. Subjects such as "Conservation of Natural Resources" etc. were dealt with. Along with the exhibitions, three-day lecture courses were organized where the members of the group teachers, lecturers, lawyers, doctors, and some

villagers undertook the task of teaching.

The youth who were contacted at the village level were asked to carry out surveys, to articulate their own needs on the basis of the data collected, because the group believes that progress can only be made by understanding the real needs of the people. No help is given to the youth except guidance when it is asked for.

The organisation of study classes only comes at a later stage for which the group provides the resource personnel. The group itself has no funds to offer. The only financial assistance that it gives is to ask some of the youth clubs to make the things that the group's offices needs (e.g. one of the youth clubs supplies them with envelopes and paper bags.). These production units are organized and run by the samithis and not the group itself.

In the science forums the group holds classes in agriculture where systems of land ownership, their evolution etc. are discussed. The Science forums find a good response because it complements academic work while providing other interesting insight. School subjects are not repeated in the forums and all the subjects tackled by the group are interdisciplinary. They make teaching interesting by going to the fundamentals, something which is not done in schools. High School Science Forums aim at showing how science teaching can be different; that it is possible to relate science to the students everyday life and to draw on their experiences. These school science clubs bring home to the student the practical application of science.

Science competitions are another activity which generates students' interest. Some of these competitions involve the parents as well. Once parents get interested, they ask for more information. quiz competitions are also organized to motivate students to do extra reading. This is used as means to involve more and more people in the programmes. In addition to direct participation there is also an indirect participation whereby villagers get together to watch these competitions, as a result

of which the villagers are provided with scientific information.

B. Science Jatras:

There are processions used to further the process of Science Education. In order to intensify their activities, the group hit upon the idea of organizing massive processions to educate people. Traditionally in Kerala, the Jatra has been used widely for religious festivals. The group realised that the Jatras could be effectively used to reach out to wide audience. The mobile science teams served the other purpose of exposing professionals to the reality of village life and brought them into contact with people who had thus far been left outside the purview of all intellectual and scientific activity. The first massive jatra was organised in 1969 to mark an anniversary of the beginning of the group's activities. This procession comprised of three smaller processions that originated in different parts of Kerala. All the three met at Tiruvalla. The members of group who participated were professionals who stopped at different villages en route and spoke to the people — not in classrooms but at street corners, in market places etc. This was a new phenomenon and it created a great interest among the people.

Another important feature of the Jatras is that during the processions the participants stop at various places such as schools, colleges, industries etc., and initiate dialogue and give talks. These contacts were supplemented by the circulation of journals and periodicals that dealt exhaustively with the subjects taken up during the Jatra. In January, the group planned 1,000 lectures for one week but the demand was much greater and therefore nearly 3,000 lecture sessions had to be conducted. Even this did not satisfy the people and their demand could not be entirely fulfilled for lack of resources personnel. Thus the pressure to expand activities came from the people themselves. In 1974, three thousand classes of a month's duration were planned and in fact, twelve thousand were held, through which 15 lakh people were contacted. During the Jatra of

1977, nearly 814 centres were organized for conducting talks and discussions out of which nearly 700 centres were organized for conducting talks and discussions out of which nearly 700 centres were in the rural area. Another significant feature of this Jatra was that science books (the Parishad's own publications) worth Rs. 26,000/- were sold, half the sales being in the rural areas. The people's enthusiasm and response to the group's activities has been unbelievably encouraging in the recent years — which refutes the 'myth' that the common people are not interested in science.

C. Publishing

One of the achievements has been in the sphere of publishing. Today it publishes nearly 1,00,000 books a month. These publications are only in Malayalam. These books are addressed to 5 different audiences:

- primary school children
- high school students
- college students
- farmers
- formal and informal members of the Parishad.

Until the group began publishing science literatures, the only science books that were published were textbooks prescribed for specific academic courses and these constituted only 1 per cent of the publishers' titles. The group is not interested in getting its books accepted by the Government. One of the members said that if their material was forced on the people by the Government in the form of prescribed textbooks, the people's reactions could be one of indifference. Another member felt that if the books were given into the hands of the Government unconditionally, it would be impossible to prevent the latter from eliminating portions of the text according to its convenience and thereby diluting the content. In spite of this stand, some of their books have been accepted by the State Government.

As a direct outcome of this activity, it may be noted that there has been an increase in the people's interest in

science literature.

D. Adult Education

Although Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India, there are certain areas (like Palghat district) where the literacy rate is as low as 44 per cent. The group members emphasised that unless illiteracy is completely eradicated, science education cannot make headway. The ultimate objective of the education programme is to develop a village level planning body. It is important that the masses play a role in decision-making. For this, the people must be equipped not only with information but with the tools of analysis as well. The group sees illiteracy as a big handicap for mass participation. Keeping this in view, it conducts some adult education classes for industrial workers and runs schools for technicians using the techniques of functional literacy. It also helps organise mahila samajams that propagate science education among women. The members agree that their efforts on this front have been peripheral but they are aware of the need to involve more and more women at the organisational as well as at the programme level. This year they want to concentrate on women's problem and on expanding women's membership in their organization.

E. Research

The group also conducts some studies that are related to people's lives and their problems. The people's help is sought in conducting these studies. The problems of the area are discussed and an alternative mode of development suggested. Research studies of this kind help in the analysis of immediate problems confronting the people which could lead to the raising of certain issues at the mass level which in turn could serve as the beginning of an action programme.

A study was conducted to measure the effects of the pollution caused by effluent from the Madura Coats factory being poured into the surrounding waters. As a follow-up of the

findings of this study, the workers felt that action must be taken to bring this dumping under control. The factory was picketed by the workers who felt that action must be taken to bring this dumping under control. The factory management attempted to buy off certain individuals from among the workers by offering them higher wages and promotions, on condition that they withdraw the strike. The villagers understood that this offer was no solution to their problems and refused to accept it. The Parishad feels that this understanding has emerged out of a constant process of discussion.

Another study that has recently been completed is related to the problems that have resulted from the extensive reclamation of backwater land in the Kuttanad area of a by a few rich families who had the resources to undertake such an expensive operation. Apart from the innumerable ecological problems, this reclamation has been the cause of the very inhuman working and living conditions of the labourers. The small peasants find it next to impossible to undertake this expensive pumping out operation every year. As a result, the contract auctioned by the government for this is either taken up by the rich landlords themselves or by outside contractors. Although the attitudes of the Government towards the problems of the small peasant is far from sympathetic because of the extensive research that has been done, this issue has received a great deal of publicity. New pressure is being brought on the Government to take a more favourable stand. A beginning is also being made in the study of tribal problems in the Wynad area.

A TOILERS' UNION

Socio-economic and Historical Settings

X district in the extreme north of Maharashtra covers over 5,400 square miles. Here the rugged, barren hill sides sparsely populated by Adivasi tribes, contrast sharply with the rich fertility of the plains and the Y river valley.

Before the advent of the British in 1818, the district

had been pillaged to Maratha feudatories. In 1812 only about 12 per cent of the land was under cultivation. But the rich fertility of the well-irrigated black soil and the heavy demand for cotton from Lancashire and Manchester provided the impetus for the government to encourage cotton cultivation in the area. Moneylenders, merchants and agriculturists were encouraged to move in from Bombay, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Railways were introduced in 1872. In 25 years there was a 50 per cent increase in the population of the district.

The Gujars, Rajputs and Marathas acquired a hold over the area by virtue of their readily available capital. Today the Adivasis constitute the vast population of landless labourers working the lands of non-Adivasi rich farmers. Responding to the demand for cotton created by the British and taking advantage of the facilities provided, the Gujars, reputed to be very good agriculturists, furthered the process of commercialisation of agricultural activity and the concomitant process of land alienation from the tribals.

Sale of land was already taking place on an extensive scale. This was precipitated by two famines that occurred between 1876 and 1900 as a result of which the percentage of sharecroppers and tenants grew disproportionately high*. Absentee landlordism increased rapidly. The British introduced the system of revenue payment by cash rendering the poor peasant incapable of paying the fixed revenue without recourse to the moneylender. Loans were given against the security of land or grain. Labourers were forced to mortgage their labour to creditors. The commercialization of agriculture, development of markets and transport networks, made for considerable appropriation of revenue to the imperial government at the cost of the impoverishment of the vast section of the Indian peasantry. The gazette of 1880 makes note of the plight of the Adivasis but no mention of remedial

	<u>1898</u>	<u>1917</u>
* Percentage of tenants and sharecroppers	2.8	35.6
Percentage of labourers	12.6	39.7

measures.

The Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act of 1948 made important provisions for the protection of tenants against eviction, placed restrictions on the transfer of agricultural land and fixed maximum rents payable. This was in keeping with the Tribal Land Protection clause according to which tribal lands cannot be alienated. Posing to fight for the equal rights of the Adivasis, the landlords asserted that the former should, like all other citizens of the country, be allowed to dispose of property as a fundamental right. In response to this the following provisions were made: Adivasis could dispose of land:

- (a) with the special permission of the Collector;
- (b) given on lease for more than 15 years;
- (c) in case of the physical disability of the Adivasi owner.

In 1950 land alienation from Adivasi peasantry had become rapid. The land was taken over through deceit and cheating mainly by non-Adivasi farmers. There were numerous cases where land was registered in the names of Adivasis but was in fact in the control of non-Adivasi landlords. There were also a few cases of the legal occupation of leases out land and isolated cases of legal transfers. By 1965 this process had reached a saturation point. The concentration of land in the hands of a few led to strained social relationships. The shackles of traditional hierarchical structures had not been broken; indebtedness drove whole families to bondage.

A legislation was passed once again making non-Adivasi land ownership in Adivasi areas illegal but this too could not be fully implemented because landlords revolted the fundamental right to property. Cases were left pending in courts for 8 .. 10 years. Under the provision of this Act, some land was reallocated.* One drive for the redistribution of land to

*In one taluk records show that 297 hectares of land was divided among 244 families out of the total 41,959 labourers.

scheduled castes and scheduled tribes remained a scheme on paper, the poor quality of land, lack of credit and financial resources and indebtedness preventing it from making any impact. Having achieved hegemony in the area as major land-owners, these non-Adivasi immigrants who constitute 10-20 per cent of the population, own 70 - 80 per cent of the land. The rest is divided into small plots distributed among 10 - 20 per cent of the population. Between 50 - 60 per cent of the people are landless.

The second Agricultural Labour Inquiry reported that where in 1950-51 the average daily wage was 100 p. in 1955-1956 this had dropped to 96 p. Today the daily casual labourer gets between Rs.2 and Rs.2.50, women half that amount. Work is available on an average for about two or three days a week. During the four months before the monsoon no work is available at all, forcing the Adivasis to borrow money or grain at interest rates often amounting to 600 per cent or more. In 1965-66, the per capita income of agricultural labourers in the district was estimated at Rs.113/- per annum with work available for men about 125 days and women 80 - 100 days.*

In 1973 the Page Committee set up by the State Government to inquire into the question of statutory minimum wages, recommended that a daily worker (adult) must get Rs.3/-, a saldar (yearly contract) Rs.1,200/- per annum with 24 days leave, a mahinedar (monthly contract) Rs.100/- per month. Observing that labourers are made to work for 16 - 18 hours a day, the committee fixed an eight hour work day with an hour's break for lunch. A three tier machinery for the settlement of wage disputes was proposed. Though the report and recommendations were greeted enthusiastically, male and female workers continue to get Rs.2 and Rs.1 respectively. As legislations piled up in government offices giving scope for corrupt practices, the suffering and exploitation of workers continued to

*Sulabha Brahma's study of agricultural labour in the district

increase. Cases were reported of saldars who did not come to work for a day being tied to a horse and dragged through the field. Women were harassed and raped. The maldars (landlords) were all powerful and the Adivasis voiceless.

Early leadership and women's militancy:

In about 1936 (to 1939), a saintly man, the son of a sardar and a labourer himself began to take up the issue of the general backwardness of the Adivasis. Although he spoke about the injustices and atrocities committed against Adivasis, his accent was on self-realization rather than on social reform, and his following which ran into thousands consisted of both Adivasis and non-Adivasis. With the bhajan singing of the spiritual leader, there emerged a 'bhajan culture' among Adivasis - collective singing, that even today plays a big part in their lives. Twice a year an arati festival was celebrated in the area. People from as far as M. P. and Gujarat came together in the district to sing bhajans.

under

In 1942/under the leadership of a close relative of this spiritual figure, the emphasis of the movement became political - the focus being the struggle for freedom against the British. Both these movements used the religious platform for organising people. They focussed on and drew strength from women. Unlike Hindu women from the upper castes, Adivasi women in this area display great zeal for organized struggle. Records going back to the 17th century tell of the militant leadership assumed by women. One incident is recounted of how nearly 400 women from this area were taken away to Poona by the Marathas in order to break the fighting spirit of the Adivasis.

Women contribute substantially in production, and it is bride price that is paid during marriages rather than dowry. Culturally these Adivasi communities are very different from Hindu societies. They are essentially autonomous, their affairs are governed by laws devised, modified and administered on

democratic lines by panels of village elders under the presidency of a headman. This tradition for most part continues even today. All community activity is undertaken collectively. After harvest the whole community gathers to sing, dance and eat together. The Adivasis like Harijans live separate from the caste village in Bilaspur, many of which do not have even the basic minimum facilities of drinking water, roads, etc.

Seasonal fishing and the gathering of forest products provide additional sources of income for the Adivasis. There is very little in the area. A cooperative sugar factory was started in 1972 but very few Adivasis are employed in it. Although this district is not one of the IADP (Integrated Area Development Plan) districts, commercial farming has begun in a big way. The rich educated and progressive farmers are aware of the benefits of new technology, have learned to want more and know how to get it. They have used their control of the district cooperative banks and state machinery to bring in capital, knowhow and equipment. The use of new varieties of wheat has spread rapidly and the increased acreage under cultivation has brought an unprecedented rise in the use of fertilizer, pesticide, pumps, tractors, power tillers, threshers, etc. This development of capitalist farming has affected the socially and economically deprived Adivasis most adversely. The literacy rate among the Adivasis in this area is 1.4 per cent (.3 per cent among women) as against 19.4 per cent in the entire district. 4.2 per cent of the Adivasi children who attend school drop out before class IV, 8 per cent reach class IV and only 4.6 per cent reach class VIII.

The present movement in its incipient form

The present movement of landless labourers and poor peasants started in its incipient form with the founding of an Adivasi service society by share cropper from the area in 1970. Within a year of its being founded an incident took place that marked the beginning of the organized protest of

workers in the area. A landlord, who employed 50 contract workers housed on his 500 acre 'seed farm', who also recruited labour from 8 - 10 of the surrounding villages refused to lend his workers grain. He had found that the market price was higher than the interest he got (two bags returned after harvest for every bag borrowed during the lean season).

The workers under the leadership of the Adivasi society decided to take out a morcha against the landlord. They marched to his farm in large numbers and when their pleas went unheard, they forced him to open the godown, picked up as much grain as each could carry. News of this protest spread to other landlords who after informing the police intercepted the workers on their way back and opened fire on the unarmed workers. By the time the police intervened two Adivasis had been killed. The police were a party to their being buried on the spot and false death certificates were issued. Cases were filed in the session courts and the Adivasis were apprehended. By the time appeals were made in the High Court and the Adivasis won their cases, most of those who had been imprisoned had completed their sentences.

This incident received a great deal of publicity. The situation had become explosive. The leader of the Adivasi society carried on a one-man struggle despite heavy repression. In an effort to bring about a peaceful solution and prevent this leader from taking recourse to 'drastic action'. Sarvodaya workers began to hold public meetings, conduct land ownership surveys, etc. In 1972 a multi-party land liberation rally was held in one of the taluk headquarters. The rally as such was a failure but it brought a small group of activists into direct contact with the Adivasis in this area. These activists who were working in an adjoining district with a social worker used the opportunity for increasing their contacts in this area. They assessed that the high incidence of atrocities in the area and the severe backlash of repression made the situation ripe for organising people.

Activists take a stand:

After the rally, all those who had decided to stay on and continue to work in the area met to discuss the future plan of action. Six of the activists who had committed themselves to live and work in the area for at least six months and were supported by friends outside did not agree with the Sarvodaya concept of class cooperation. They opposed the suggestion of a padyatra to educate the Adivasis about their rights. They felt that the Adivasis were aware but unorganized and therefore helpless. In spite of these differences, they reached a working compromise based on agreement about three matters of policy:

- to have no allegiance to any political party;
- that only actual workers have the right to make decisions;
- that they would not initiate violence.

The first programme undertaken was to retrieve land that belonged to the Adivasis but was controlled by the landlord. The activists and Adivasis together contacted the patwari, verified ownership and then formally requested the landlords to return the lands. Once the inevitable refusal was met with, the Adivasis decided to forcefully occupy the lands. Applications were given to the police explaining the situation and protection was sought in the case of resistance from the landlords. In spite of this strictly legitimate procedure that was adopted, the Adivasis had to face the combined opposition of the landlords and the police. In three months over 400 acres were occupied by the Adivasis, dalits and Buddhists. This material gain was combined with an increase in the consciousness of the people of the need for organized and united resistance.

This movement was carried a step forward with the organized boycott of the 1972 assembly election (ballot papers were returned blank). The Adivasis realized theirs was not a movement for trading in votes. Corrupt election practices were exposed and the campaign brought an expansion in the mass base of the movement. The boycott was successful and in spite

of the pressure of power groups only 33 per cent polling took place as against the usual 55 - 60 per cent.

The next rally organized on May Day 1972 brought together 8,000 workers from all over the Taluk. This rally was not a usual May Day ritual. There was an open exchange of experiences and a sincere attempt to formulate a strategy of action. A fifty per cent increase in wages (which ranged between 400 and 800 Rs. per annum) was demanded, fixed hours of work, a weekly holiday and the proper maintenance of books by landlords. The saldars put forward the demand that they would negotiate separately for domestic and farm work. Merchas, dharnas and gheraos were organized to withstand the landlords' attempts to crush agitation and the latter were forced to sign written agreements. The Lal Nishan party extended help and strengthened this struggle.

Formation of the Union:

In June 1972, within six months of the commencement of organized activity, a union of workers was formed. The activists were of the opinion that only a mass organization with the ability to crystallize the hopes and aspirations of the masses could carry forward the movement. The original loosely knit organization that had emerged out of the multi-party rally seemed to lack the potential to assume this form.

Work that had begun in a few isolated villages years earlier has today spread to nearly 250 villages in four talukas out of the eleven in the district. Although initially work focussed on the Adivasis who constitute 50 per cent of the population, the movement in keeping with its ideological stand has taken other oppressed sections into its fold.

The activists believe that in a society based on private property it is impossible to make the concept of collective ownership of land a reality. Land that has been retrieved by the Adivasis can be owned collectively in the true sense of the term only when the concept of private ownership itself has been

demolished. The activists do not feel that constructive work does not consist in forming and running cooperative societies, obtaining loans, etc. Struggle, through which the oppressed discover their humanity and also win minimum economic rights is constructive activity and the preparation for this must also be seen as constructive. The activists have no objection to taking up 'economic programmes' as long as this does not change the main direction of the movement, but it is seen that normally these involve a heavy loss of time and collective energy and instead arousing a feeling of strength create a dependency on the organization.

Achieving total transformation

The activists are convinced that poverty is a political and economic issue. Hunger and suffering cannot be eradicated unless the oppressed are made aware of the forces oppressing them and are prepared to act against these forces collectively. State power must be challenged and the oppressed consciously assume a leading role in all spheres of decision-making. The objective of total transformation cannot be achieved unless there is a penetration to all parts of society. Only a change in the basis of political power through the constant and collective action of the masses - the toilers - can bring this about. The mere handing over of political power from one party to another and change in government is not enough. Fundamental change in State power cannot come if the power of the powerful is preserved.

The masses must be made aware that within the existing system, it is the economically powerful who have a stranglehold on political power and whose vested interests the State serves. They should therefore not be misled by hollow propaganda and slogans. Although the effect of change in the representation of class interest - real change in the basis of political power, will be felt immediately, other transformations cannot be postponed

until that is achieved. Social cultural and political transformation is an ongoing process that is necessarily a prolonged one. None of the present political parties have an alternative to offer - one that takes cognisance of the unique socio-economic and cultural forces in the country which are themselves not divorced from those operating in the world. Even the left parties have alienated themselves from the masses.

Mass organisation:

Only a mass organization with a mass base will set in motion this process of transformation. Organized protest in isolated pockets does not have much of an impact by itself. Mass movements must link themselves to similar movements all over the country. The approach must be extensive rather than intensive. These organizations must have relative autonomy vis-a-vis political parties. This autonomy presumes a local leadership that is aware of the political task of the mass organization, which must have an inseparable allegiance to the masses. Mass organization leaders are the mediators between the aspirations of the masses, result of the concrete reality and the political perspective. Although the stage for the preparation of such mass organization has come, the actual process has not yet begun.

Leadership and internal democracy:

In a mass organization, the relationship between the masses and the leadership is a dynamic one - there is in fact no dichotomy between the two - leaders exist within the masses and emerge from them. Although the concept of mass consciousness in totality is an ideal one, the number of activists emerging must grow continuously. It is they who have an overall perspective of the situation; understand and analyse forces operating and make crucial decisions. Mass consciousness exists in so much that the leadership is questioned, guided and controlled by the people.

The activists not only believe that there is a definite

correlation between ends and means, but assert that there is in fact no dichotomy between the two. It must be very clearly understood however that ends do not justify all or any means but neither can ends be sacrificed for means. The group subscribes completely to the principle of democratic functioning and operate completely within the legal framework. They do not believe in closed door meetings, maintain complete openness with each other and the people thus facilitating the participation of the latter.

Internal democratic practices alone can be safeguard against the organization becoming the playground for power struggles among the leaders. No decisions are taken individually but only all full-time activists together in consultation with the youth club members. It is these democratic practices that make it possible for the masses to use direct and indirect means to control the leadership. Although they do not explicitly select their leaders, they not only support or restrict the growth of the leaders but also build pressure on those who do not represent their cause or may have become corrupt in the process. Their acceptance or rejection of a leader is an indicator of their consciousness level.

Full-time activists maintain a direct relationship with the masses in this area by keeping mobile continuously. Thus the Youth Club members are not the only link between the masses and the activists. No one activist is assigned the same area for too long. This is in order that the loyalty of the people is to their organization rather than to one individual in it. In order to facilitate joint decision-making, for every struggle and issue a local level committee is formed comprising of landless labourers, women, youth club members and one or two full-time activists. Public meetings are held and people's reactions sought, giving them an opportunity to articulate their ideas. This process also brings

to the forefront workers who are willing to take initiative and responsibilities. Local leadership must multiply and outside workers must focus their attention on creating conditions which throw up this leadership.

To build up people's solidarity, issues are used with the clear understanding that the purpose of the struggle lies beyond it. Only issues that relate to people's rights are taken up and organized discontent displayed. Every new issue involves new villages, thereby spreading the mass base of the organization. This organization has no formal membership. This was a conscious decision for although it is not possible to assess the numerical strength of the organization, this makes for an openness that contributes to the emergence of the right kind of leadership — those who struggle for and truly represent the masses.

Their exposure to outside influences and rebelliousness makes young people most open to change. A process has to be set in motion that will, through its own dynamism make leaders out of them — leaders who devoting themselves to the task of struggling for the rights of the people. The leadership must emerge and mould itself spontaneously through the process of struggle, issue-raising, joint analysis, study, political education and mutual criticism. Crash courses in leadership training and cadre-building attempted by voluntary organizations will not be able to build this leadership.

The leadership in voluntary agencies and political parties is wrought with vested interests, paternalism, authoritarianism and contradictory life styles. Traditional leaders have continuously fooled the people and perpetuated values that are opposed to the kind of change aspired for. In these organizations for example, the size of the office, number of vehicles owned, etc., are of prime importance. In contrast, these activists lead austere lives believing that commitment to the people, simplicity, love, brotherhood etc., are values that are necessary. The office of this group is housed in the hut where they live. The activists

have taken the firm decision not to accept funds from any organization but only receive contributions from friends for their subsistence.

No hierarchical structures have been built and no designations given to members. All the activists are fairly conversant with most legislations and whoever happens to be in the office when someone comes, discusses the issue and deals with the problem. Educational materials for training and struggle are prepared by the activists themselves. One Adivasi woman said, "When they first came we didn't accept them; many people have come and gone but our brothers suffered, went hungry, endangered their lives for the organization. Today we share the same cause and feel one with them - the individual is unimportant - the work speaks for itself."

The emphasis on selecting and preparing activists known to be honest, sincere and conscientious, easy to get along with. All this cannot be inculcated in people through the use of bureaucratic methods and formalized training. Self and mutual criticism and open confrontation are encouraged. If interpersonal relationships are healthy, work inevitably becomes qualitatively better. Jealousy, competitiveness, etc., must be guarded against.

In every new struggle, the new workers who have emerged during early struggles are involved and encouraged to participate. At times experienced leadership is kept in the background and the new allowed to take the lead even at the cost of making mistakes, for this is the only way in which they will learn.

Learning through continuous evaluation and analysis:

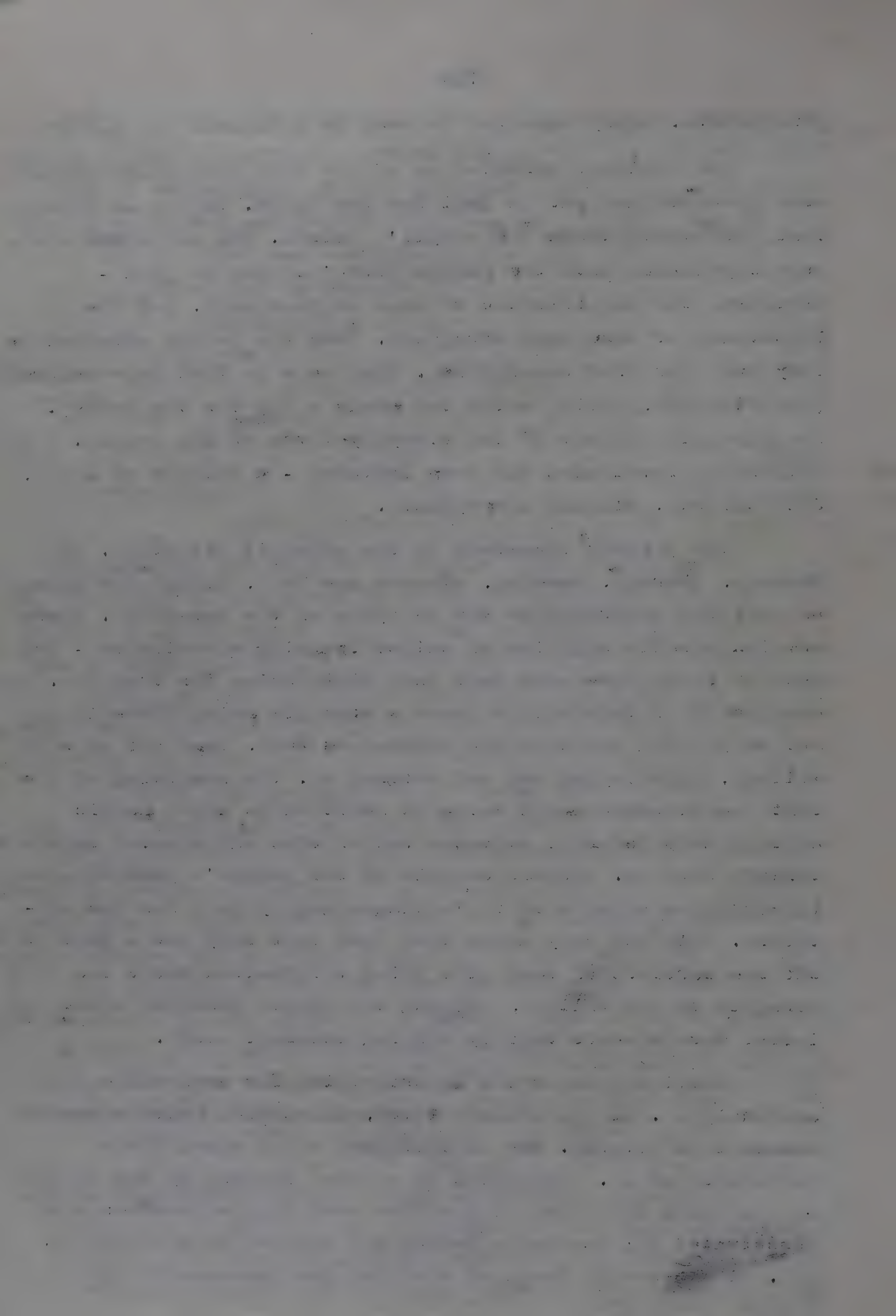
After every struggle the full time activists and youth club members together evaluate and analyse the action in order to avoid repeating the mistakes and provide opportunities for the constructive confrontation and criticism of the leadership. Each new activist is expected to write or critically analyse situations that they have been involved in directly. This gives an overall view of the situation and develops a political

perspective. Every occasion is used to this end.

One incident narrated is of the time when fifty people were arrested and put in jail for two weeks. Officials thought that this would break the people's spirit. The activists who were imprisoned with the people held 'classes in jail - discussed the significance of such imprisonment, and the importance of more such struggles. When the people were set free they were far from demoralized. They were in fact more determined (and stronger, having eaten two meals a day for two weeks). The struggle is part of the everyday lives of the people. A new culture of revolution has been fostered - a culture of songs, folk ballets, slogans and symbols.

The primary classroom is the struggle situation. In Dharnas, gheraos, morchas, classes are held, strategies changed or modified according to the analysis of the situation. There are innumerable examples of unique training experiences - but none of them have been made into rigid rules for training. One example is of information about a struggle being disseminated not on printed leaflets but carried on foot, read out at each village, then copied out and carried on. The rewriting of the text had an educational value in addition to which public meeting made for real exposure rather than anticipated exposure through reading. Another example of the people's participation in struggles comes when the villagers supply food for the agitators. This not only makes them feel that they are a part of it but the carriers of food also bring information about the struggle to the village, keeping the people informed about the latest developments thereby keeping interest alive.

Shivirs provide the opportunities for systematic study and analysis. At the primary level, discussion centres around issues like poverty. The participants speak about their experience of it. Discussion is carried forward by the raising of questions about how it may have come into existence; what perpetuated it; how human beings are related to one another, etc. At the second level of training the participants do a



historical analysis of the village where the shivir is being held. Not only are injustice facts described but the transformation from the feudal landlord tenant relationship to the capital wage relationship is also explained. The class structure of Indian society with particular reference to the rural situation forms an integral part of the study. Earlier shivirs concentrated on historical materialism but today the emphasis is on production relationships in both urban and rural areas. In the shivirs too, participation is not restricted to those who attend. Attempts are made to involve the whole village. One example of an attempt to do this is for the youth club in the village to make all the physical arrangements and the village as such to host the participants.

Women play a very important part in the activities of this organisation. The militancy of the women in this area has considerably strengthened the struggle and given it a special recognition. In all the economic and social struggles, women take up the first line of leadership. They have displayed extraordinary tact in dealing with the police, government officials etc. A conscious effort has been made to build up leadership qualities in the women. Apart from raising their voice against drinking, gambling etc., the women are drawn into the mainstream of class struggle on wage issues. This does not undermine the need for them to be organized separately as women while being organized as members of the oppressed class. Women stand out as being doubly exploited. Although the Adivasi woman is economically independent, her struggle for equality with men will be a long one that will have to be fought simultaneously. On the surface, she might appear to be 'liberated'. Adivasi social norms are not as stringent as those of the Hindus; divorce is easier - and yet the Adivasi woman is not an equal even with the men of her class.

In this organization there is a tremendous emphasis on collective singing. Singing is part of the tribal tradition. Today, old familiar folk songs are filled with revolutionary themes. Women take an active part in this singing. During

struggles and marches, the valleys and streets echo with the vibrant voices of the women. The activists are convinced of the need to use traditional institutions giving them new content. The Bhajan singing tradition of the tribals has been well used in organizing them. Accepted social, cultural and religious institutions if used properly can push the movement forward, give it substance and add new dimensions to the struggle.

